The Dilemma of Leadership Succession in Academic Libraries in Ghana

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Abstract

In a significant number of academic libraries in Ghana, incumbent Head Librarians stay on longer for a post-retirement contract, because there appears to be a lack of qualified candidates to take over leadership roles. The apparent gap in leadership succession may be a consequence of a lack of management's desire to grow their leaders as well as a dearth of self-motivation on the part of the staff. As part of the solutions to filling seeming gaps in leadership continuity, organizations grow their leaders internally through mentoring, coaching and training, experience and management support for staff professional/career development. Succession planning identifies prospective staff with the desire to take up future leadership roles. There are arguments for and against succession planning in academic libraries as a means of selecting and appointing university Librarians. The current study explores succession planning strategies as means of choosing prospective leaders in academic libraries in Ghana. The study adopted a case study research approach. University Librarians of ten (10) public university libraries were purposely selected for the study. A structured interview was employed to collect the data that form the basis of the analysis. The study revealed that succession planning is lacking in academic libraries in Ghana. Appointment to the University Librarian role is based on general university selection criteria for all academic staff of the university, including academic library staff. Though some respondents agree that succession planning is a good strategy to grow staff internally to take over future leadership roles, others assert that staff progression in academic libraries must be based on scholarly publication and long service, as prescribed by the University appointment and promotion policy. The study concludes that leadership continuity in academic libraries in Ghana is not necessarily dependent on any well-thought-out succession plan implementation. As a result of the staff's inability to meet university promotion and appointment requirements for academic staff, many university libraries lack that critical mass of potential candidates for the role of university librarian.

Keywords: Ghana, Academic libraries, Librarians, Professional development, Career development, Management support, Staff motivation

Background to the study

Leadership is arguably a very significant aspect of institutional governance. Leadership is quite intricate concept with several facets and may be conceptualized in various theoretical methods. Leadership may be defined in terms of emphasis on collective procedure; as an innate attribute of leaders; as conducts and behaviours; as authority relationship; as a change process; and from a skills standpoint (Northouse, 2019; Aibieyi, 2014). All the above leadership concepts are important for the success of any established organization, and the adoption of different leadership concepts is contingent upon the culture and structure of a given institution. One organization may identify

leaders with individual leadership traits to lead, while another establishment will grow its leaders through leadership development processes. Ultimately organizations must always have a reservoir of persons with leadership qualities and the required skills and competencies to create a shared vision and achieve collective goals. For this study, leadership is defined as a development process where libraries grow their leaders to take over future leadership positions.

Contemporary academic libraries, otherwise called university libraries, require effective leadership skills and competence. It is essential to focus on leadership issues that are critical to academic libraries' growth and development. However, Aslam (2018) notes that there are inadequate studies that focus on effective leadership in academic libraries, even though several researchers have attempted to define leadership skills and competence for academic institutions and also organizations. Since 2000, there has been a general concern about the paucity of librarians with effective leadership qualities in academic libraries (Weiner, 2003). But contemporary research in academic library leadership at the global and regional levels indicates that libraries now grow their leaders. Some libraries, adopting succession planning programmes of some successful corporations, prepare members of staff to take over leadership roles (Nixon, 2008). Literature also shows that an internal process of leadership development is not limited to academic libraries. According to Nixon (2008), the Multnomah County Library in Portland, Oregon USA, also developed a program to prepare and train potential staff members for higher leadership positions.

Succession planning is designed to develop prospective employees to take up leadership roles in organizations. It is that aspect of organizational development which grows and owns the staff development process which practically set the pathway for individual career growth and leadership continuity. According to Singer and Griffith (2010), succession planning encapsulates the attempt by libraries to methodologically develop the intellectual and knowledge capacity of individual staff for future senior positions. Succession planning enables corporations to expect leadership changes, evaluate the competencies of personnel, create a strategic plan to recognize staff with leadership potential, establish the gaps in their competencies and offer professional development opportunities, mentoring, training and coaching and experiences to groom the library employees for a leadership role (Hall-Ellis & Grealy, 2013; Rothwell,

2010; Nixon, 2008). This study examines leadership and management practices in academic libraries. It focuses on succession planning strategies as means of choosing prospective leaders in academic libraries in Ghana.

Problem Statement

In Ghana, the academic culture of research and publication determines who becomes the Head of an academic library, and this approach permeates nearly all public university libraries and libraries of higher institutions of learning. The Head of the Academic library holds a senior management position. The occupant of the position must therefore possess adequate qualifications, including having a postgraduate degree(s), long years of professional and or teaching experience and extensive scholarly publications. Staff are, therefore, required to develop themselves in preparedness to take up leadership role(s). In libraries where there is a paucity of prospective leaders, incumbent Head librarians may stay on longer for a post-retirement contract (Dorfman, 2009; Luna, 2012). Otherwise, in cases where there appears to be a gap in the chain of command in respect of leadership succession, appointing authorities may extend their search for new academic library leaders outside the existing library setup.

The last decade has witnessed increasing population growth of young Ghanaian adult professional librarians of age between 25 – 45 years (Luna, 2012), who have updated their knowledge and professional skills through the acquisition of higher degrees (MPhil & Doctoral degrees) and continued professional development, thereby positioning themselves for leadership roles. The increasing population of young qualified librarians notwithstanding, there are trends in disruption of leadership succession in academic libraries. There are now situations where incumbent Head Librarians extend their appointment after their compulsory retirement age as corroborated by Dorfman (2009) and Luna (2012). The academic librarian position is professorial, or at least an Associate Professorial position. Therefore, the occupant of that position must have climbed up the ranks – Assistant Librarian, Senior Assistant Librarian, Deputy Librarian (Associate Professor grade), to University/Academic Librarian (Full Professor). Each level on the career progression ladder requires specific qualifications, without which the trajectory of the professional career will be thwarted. Prospective staff must therefore elevate themselves to meet the requirement to occupy

leadership positions. In the current circumstances, there appears to be a gap between the head of the library and the next in command in terms of rank, in most academic libraries in Ghana. In other words, when the position of the university Librarian becomes vacant, there is often a lack of adequately qualified internal candidates to occupy the position, because the next most senior person does not meet the qualification requirements. Consequently, either the incumbent Librarian stays on with a post-retirement appointment, or an external person is sought to take up the leadership role. The factors that account for these gaps between the incumbent librarian and the next most senior person in terms of suitability, and the measures that are put in place to address this apparent challenge, are the concerns of this study.

Main goal of the study

The main goal of the research is to examine how succession planning contributes to leadership continuity in academic libraries in Ghana.
The specific research objectives are;

a) To assess the criteria for appointment to a University Librarian's role;

b) To examine whether academic libraries in Ghana have succession planning programmes;

(c) To determine the level of preparedness of staff for leadership roles; and

(d) To ascertain the challenges of identifying prospective leaders in academic libraries in Ghana

Research Questions

The research questions are as follows:

1. What are the criteria for appointment to the University Librarian's role?

2. Do academic libraries in Ghana have deliberately planned leadership succession programmes?

3. How do staff prepare themselves for leadership roles?

4. What are the challenges in identifying prospective leaders in academic libraries in Ghana?

Significance of the study

The dearth of local scholarly work on leadership succession in academic libraries may be a consequence of a lack of strategic plan implementation on the trajectory of staff in academic libraries in Ghana. This is on the assumption that every academic librarian aspires to be a University Librarian and individuals will remain in the same institution throughout his/her work life. The current study will fill a research gap and contribute to the existing literature on leadership succession in Ghanaian university libraries. The study is also significant in two respects:

1) it will provide the framework for implementing leadership succession strategies in academic libraries. 2) The study will further inspire future research in best practices in the field of leadership succession in academic libraries.

Scope of the study

The research focuses on leadership succession planning in academic libraries in Ghana. The study investigates the extent to which a succession planning strategy is factored in the process of choosing a University Librarian in academic libraries in Ghana.

Literature Review
Theoretical Framework.

The underpinning theoretical framework for the current study is the Dreyfus Five Stage Model of Skill Acquisition (Dreyfus, 2004; Hall-Ellis & Grealy, 2013), which suggests that mentoring, coaching, and professional development equip employees with experiential growth in their career paths in the organization. A key assumption of the Dreyfus model is that skill transformation is the result of practice and mastery. The process of acquiring skills passes through five levels. These stages include novice level; advanced beginner level; competent level; proficient level; and expert level. Advancing from the first level to the fifth stage is seen as a stable move from strict observance of instructions to the level of instinctive decision-making mode that depends on a profound knowledge of the subject matter. To derive the best performance from staff, managers must define employees' skills development levels so that skill gaps can be identified internally. This is to provide alternative career paths, recognise rising employees with the potential to take up leadership roles and promote those who demonstrate value addition to the organization. The model helps to explain how staff move or progress from the lower ranks (the novice stage) and grow through staff development and experience, and subsequently to mastery (expert level) of tasks.

Reasons for Leadership Planning in Academic Libraries

There has been increasing population growth of young adult professionals of age between 25 – 40 years

(Luna, 2012), who in the last decade have updated their knowledge and professional skills through the acquisition of higher degrees (MPhil & Doctoral degrees) and continued professional development, thereby positioning themselves for leadership roles. In addition to the increasing population of young, qualified librarians, there are also trends in the disruption of leadership succession in academic libraries. According to Dorfman (2009) and Luna (2012), there is now a situation where incumbent head librarians remain in their positions longer, after their mandatory retirement age. Even though the observations made by both Dorfman (2009 and Luna (2012) are within the American context. This observation appears to be different in the Ghanaian context. Arguably, no university librarian is on post-retirement contract currently.

Implementing Succession Plans in Academic Libraries

Leadership Succession is one of the major policies for leadership development in an establishment. The concept is designed to develop prospective employees to take up leadership roles in organizations. It is that aspect of organizational development which grows and owns the staff development process which practically sets the pathway for individual career growth and leadership continuity. According to Leuzinger and Rowe (2017), the concept of succession plan implementation involves recruiting, developing, retaining, and enhancing library personnel capacity in preparation to fill future leadership gaps. Singer and Griffith's (2010) notion of succession planning is an organized attempt by the library to guarantee that there is always a qualified candidate to occupy important positions, ensure the retention and progress of prospective employees with adequate skills and experience, and inspire personal progression. Leadership succession strategy enables establishments to predict leadership changes, evaluate employees' performance, and develop policies to recognize employees with leadership prospects. It ascertains the weaknesses in staff performance and creates opportunities for continued staff professional development, mentoring, training and coaching and practice to train employees for leadership roles. (Hall-Ellis & Grealy, 2013; Rothwell, 2010).

In their evaluative study of succession planning in university libraries in Owerri, Imo State of Nigeria, Onwubiko, Onu and Ossai-Onah (2010) corroborate the view of Seniwoliba (2015) that succession, among other things, also includes developing future workforce capacities. They share the common notion that succession also entails a calculated execution of a well-designed plan to ensure leadership continuity in critical roles, retention and support for personal progress and building knowledge capital for the future.

In the view of Weare (2015), leadership succession should broadly entail planning and management and should not be limited to only top-level executives or in this case senior professional Librarians, but implementation should widely cover the right number and relevant staff to meet the organization's needs in a long period.

Galbraith, Smith, and Walker (2012) suggest that the definition of succession planning is broader in scope than just identifying an heir to leadership positions. The process involves a continuous effort at building employee's skills, knowledge, and experience to their leadership potential. Seniwoliba (2015), shares a similar view that succession planning is more than just identifying leaders to prepare internally, it also involves holistically building staff capacity. The leadership development process therefore should not be focused on a single brilliant individual or a few bright staff, but all employees should be considered as potential leaders capable of taking up leadership roles. Hall-Ellis and Grealy (2013) also note that succession planning permits an organization to expect a change in leadership, evaluate employee competency, identify potential leaders, and support career growth, mentoring, and practices to prepare employees for staff transformation. Mentoring is a vital element of the succession planning process. It is partly a deliberate effort of supervision to prepare junior and usually inexperienced member of staff who has the potential to take up a future leadership role. Ngangaa et al. (2020), and Thompson and Yebowaah (2012), view mentoring as a developmental relationship between a more experienced individual who provides guidance and provides exemplary leadership, coaching, and benefactor for a much-inexperienced individual with shared characteristics often in the same organization. The art of mentoring has many phases, these include teaching, coaching, guiding, advising, motivating, sponsoring, protecting, communicating, validating, counselling, and role modelling.

Perspectives on Leadership Succession Planning in Academic Libraries

Despite the advocacy for leadership succession strategy in university libraries, there is still relevant literature that shares contrasting opinions. Succession planning is said to be private sector-oriented in the

business sphere, so it may not necessarily be good or appropriate for higher institutions of learning such as academic libraries.

According to Aversa (2005), in his work on leadership concerns for schools of library and information science, contrary to what pertains in the corporate sector, the responsibility for individual aspiration of faculty members does not rest on the universities to groom prospective leaders for takeover, rather faculty members are personally responsible for their career advancement. This policy or tradition will probably remain unchanged in the university system for a long time. The focus of tertiary institutions of learning to date remains on teaching, research, and service. Even though faculty (including librarians) rise through the ranks with corresponding increases in remuneration and titles designating higher stature for accepting administrative positions, this career pathway does not imitate or represent that of the corporate career path.

In a similar study, Weare (2015) notes that in the university setting, heads of departments, deans, and analogous headship usually have fixed terms in office, commencing and ending on particular dates. Similar conditions prevail in academic libraries. Weare (2015), further asserts that one can simply imagine the controversy that would meet the execution of a succession planning program in the university governance system.

In academic librarianship, the probability of choosing a candidate from within the library and amongst colleagues to replace a retiring colleague is low, because the decision to select a replacement is not made internally. Usually, a search committee is constituted by the University administration which does the selection for and on behalf of the university, rather than librarians and library staff.

Galbraith et al. (2012) as cited in Weare (2015) undertook a study on succession planning at Association of Research Libraries (ARL) member institutions, and the result of the research revealed that most ARL libraries have limited influence on the choice of who is appointed to the university librarian role since the power to appoint rests with the University.

In a cynical tone, Noon (2004) questions why succession has to be planned for lazy people, and that individuals must take responsibility for their ambition. The thrust of the criticism is that keen followers of succession planning appear to ignore the fact that individuals can recognize their potential for leadership positions.

Rowley (1989) argued that there are obvious difficulties in personnel planning for a particular set of professionals. The author made five critical claims about manpower planning. The claim that manpower planning in the information sphere is unattainable, remains accurate to date. The speedy revolution of information and communication technology is so rapid that one will be unsure to estimate or determine what the needs will be say, five to ten years from now.

Effects of Succession Planning

As observed earlier, a search in relevant library literature did not reveal sound reasons why a leadership succession strategy is a suitable process for filling expected top-level positions and there is no substantial proof that leadership succession strategies in academic libraries are effective. According to Munde (2000), given the anticipated rates of retirement, potential staff will be promoted to leadership positions, because they are ready to assume future leadership positions. It is then up to the prospective candidates to speedily improve their capabilities and competencies in readiness for the appointed time. Munde (2000) supported the idea of "organizational mentoring," endeavours funded by library managers to assist libraries to meet the needs of employees. This approach seems a plausible idea. But, the proposition in the article seems to suggest that succession planning is basically to fill existing vacancies, and as such may take the same shape as a succession planning program. But such an attempt is likely to only continue the same old corporate structure.

The notion of succession planning according to Singer and Griffith (2010), is a critical evaluation of vital future, and enhancing employees' skills and knowledge, mentoring and experience, to position staff for future leadership roles.

Challenges of Identifying Prospective Leaders

In an attempt to draw a contrast between leadership succession strategy on the one hand and administration and personnel development on the other, Rothwell (2010) pointed out that corporations that engage in the practice of preparing employees for leadership succession are not many. Normally, such organizations just fill available vacancies as they arise. Rothwell (2010) wrote that such an organization forms a group of lingering employees who lack the competence to meet organizational strategic goals. Even though the argument of Rothwell (2010) emphasizes personnel planning, he nonetheless

explains the precise challenges of the leadership succession process. A strategy to replace anticipated job openings with internally and exclusively prepared and trained staff for the specific vacancies will most probably stick to outdated corporate arrangements. Siambi, (2022) proposed a leadership succession plan that emphasizes employee advancement instead of just replacing roles.

According to Hawthorne (2011), it is beneficial to implement programmes that focus on persistent growth and development of talents, rather than concentrate on particular job titles and responsibilities. It should be understood that whenever there is a job opening, library directors and personnel managers ought to define what the present role requirements are, set new goals and search for candidates who can achieve those goals, instead of simply repeating existing job descriptions and advertising.

The vacancy for the librarian position needs to be filled with change management leaders with innovative ideas, instead of filling the position with mediocre people. Plus, those who advocate for the implementation of leadership succession strategy in libraries have defined the succession planning process as one that deliberately emphasizes particular employees.

According to Hall-Ellis and Grealy (2013), succession planning also implies identifying persons who exhibit characteristics of a leader in an organization. The implication is that if such a leadership succession plan concentrates on homegrown employees, the most likely choice will be the candidate who is most qualified for the anticipated vacancy. Unfortunately, this method compounds the probability of filling positions with the same quality as those being replaced. Instead of replacing expected vacant roles with old performance criteria, it is essential to evaluate vacancies based on present library requirements, and then fashion out means of filling various vacancies. Succession planning is eventually myopic.

In a related study, Weare (2015) asserts that it appears unreasonable to identify and prepare a staff to take over a future vacancy that may take a very long time to exist. The changing times bring new challenges that require new skills and knowledge, and competencies to deal with. In other words, different skill sets may be required for future vacancies. There has been a significant change in the library profession in the last twenty years or so, and the changing trend continues at an unprecedented rapid pace. Each vacancy should be evaluated in the context of the organizational requirements or needs. If the staff capacity-building process is centred on a few selected employees, other staff will feel neglected and dispirited. This may draw envy and resentment among employees who feel ignored in the whole process of leadership development. This may even result in staff attrition if employees feel that they have not been treated fairly by the system. In other words, if employees feel there has been unfair discrimination against them, they may opt to leave the organization for another organization which gives them hope of better career prospects.

Employees who are pre-selected for leadership growth and advancement may start to cruise, knowing that they are recognized and assured of imminent promotion. But if those identified and selected for leadership advancement are more than expected leadership positions, there will be fierce and sometimes unhealthy rivalry amongst the contenders. This can adversely affect the organization. The one chosen for training programs, but eventually not promoted, may decide to sever relations with the organization. The main defect of the leadership succession policy conception is true that the future is not predictable. The propensity in many corporations to in most organizations to deal with the future as if it is an extension of the future is apparent. Employees with leadership potential may have the prospect of increasing their knowledge and developing new skills, but such skill sets may not necessarily be the future needs. There are changing user expectations and their needs are becoming more complex each passing day. The skill requirements for future leadership roles in academic libraries are most likely to change.

Methodology

The research design focuses on gathering and interpreting qualitative data. Ten (10) University Librarians were selected purposely for the study. The data that was collected and the analysis or interpretation of the same from the 10 University Librarians sought to address the four research objectives. Primary and secondary sources provided the data that form the basis of this research report. Primary data is the original data that was collected from the research field, or the study subjects and/or area. The data-gathering process followed established social science research methods. The current study adopted a case study approach. The study, therefore, followed qualitative data collection procedures. The main instrument for the collection of the primary data was an interview schedule. SurveyMonkey was used to send and receive

feedback from respondents for the interview schedule. Secondary data was extracted from existing literature on the current research topic. An extensive literature search was undertaken to gather relevant information. The researcher did a critical evaluation of available literature that relate to the current problem under investigation.

Information from books, journals, and annual reports, formed the sources of secondary data for this report. In other words, existing relevant literature was consulted for both theoretical and empirical background to the study. Thematic and content analysis was employed. In other words, analysis was done based on subjects as they relate to the objective of the study.

Results

A population of ten (10) heads of academic libraries in ten (10) public university libraries in Ghana participated in the interview schedule. Seven (7), representing a 70% response rate, provided feedback.

Demographic Characteristics
Age Distribution of University Librarians

In terms of age distribution, 6(85.7%) out of seven 7 university librarians studied are above 50 years, while only one is below fifty years. But none is above 60 years. For university librarians, knowledge about their age is significant in determining whether or not any one of them is on a post-retirement contract or appointment. Their age bracket shows that none of the incumbent university librarians in this particular research is on a retirement contract. The table below shows the age distribution of university librarians.

Table 1: Age distribution of University Librarians

Age		Frequency	Percentage	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	31 - 40	0	-	-	
	41 - 50	1	14.3	14.3	14.3
	51 - 60	6	85.7	85.7	100
	60+	0	-	-	
	Total	7	100	100	

Source: field data, 2021

Criteria for Appointment to University Librarian's Role
Process and Promotions of Academic Library Staff

The study sought to establish the processes by which University Librarians rise through the ranks. In respect of study objective one, which examines the criteria for appointment to the University Librarian's role, most of them agreed that academic librarians are promoted by the university assessment criteria. The primary criteria for promotion, as found in university statutes, condition of service and appointment contracts, are scholarly publication and long service. In other words, the procedures and processes of promotion in academic libraries are not different from those criteria which are used to assess other senior members of the university teaching staff. The statements below by university librarians confirm the promotion policy that has been stated by the researcher.

Librarians' promotion is through long service and Scholarly publishing (respondent 1, 2021)

Academic library staff are promoted through long service, good conduct and publications (respondent 3, 2021)

I went through promotion assessment criteria guided by the scheme of service (respondent 4, 2021)

The university promotion criteria apply to all senior members of the university, including academic librarians. Every member of staff needs to get promoted or advance from one rank to the next.

Selection of Candidate for the Position of University Librarian

The selection process of a candidate for the position of University Librarian was also examined. The collection of data on this was necessary to address research objective one. Qualifications and current ranks of candidates are crucial factors in the selection process.

Respondents' Impression of Succession Planning in Academic Libraries

In respect of research objective two, the researcher inquired if the academic libraries have any succession plan strategies currently in place. All the respondents seem to have an idea about the concept of succession planning. The following expressions

represent respondents' views:

My notion of succession planning generally is that it is a leadership development process strategy which builds the capacity of internal staff and allows organizations to select home-grown employees to take up leadership positions or roles (respondent 1, 2021)

It is a deliberate plan or policy put in place by an organization or institution to either recruit or train personnel/people for future leadership positions from within the organization (respondent 3, 2021)

But Noon (2004) thinks that leadership succession should not be planned for lazy people and that staff should take their ambition into their own hands. In other words, staff should be responsible for their career trajectories.

Staff Leadership Development Programmes

It is expected that every employee will have an ambition to grow on the job and take up a leadership role while advancing through the ranks. This may be achieved through experiences and continuous training and development. Organizations make a concerted effort to build staff capacity by designing leadership training programmes as well as providing the opportunity for staff professional development. The study explored the leadership growth and capacity opportunities available in selected Ghanaian academic libraries.

Succession Plan Implementation in Academic Libraries

Objective two of the current study seeks to examine the availability or otherwise of succession planning programmes in Ghanaian academic libraries. So the researcher sought to find out if there were deliberate succession planning strategies in Ghanaian academic libraries. The study did not find any of the libraries making a deliberate attempt to build leadership capacity for the future takeover of leadership roles. However, 6(85.7%) out of 7 respondents agreed that the deliberate implementation of succession planning strategies in academic libraries would be a good idea. In the comments that follow, respondents said:

Grooming excellent performers to take up leadership roles motivates people to improve their performance. I am for Succession planning (respondent 1, 2021)

I think it is a laudable idea for academic libraries to have a succession planning strategy or policy to select candidates for future leadership positions (respondent 2, 2021)

I support the advocacy for the implementation of succession planning in academic libraries (respondent 3, 2021)

Great idea to have such a strategy in all libraries and all positions (respondent 4, 2021)

Succession planning is the best option for selecting an individual for a leadership role (respondent 5, 2021)

To encourage all prospective staff and mentor them to take up the challenge (respondent 7, 2021)

The above views of the university librarians corroborate Galbraith et al (2012) who recommend that succession planning in academic libraries should be a priority. Nixon (2008) also advocates for growing your strategy to train and mentor potential staff to take over leadership positions.

However, Weare (2010) thinks that succession planning in academic libraries is not the best strategy. According to Aversa (2005), individuals are responsible for their leadership aspirations. It is not the responsibility of the library management to groom persons for takeover or replacement sake.

Mentorship

Mentoring is a process, and it finds relevance in the Dreyfus model of skill acquisition (Dreyfus, 2004). The process of mentoring also begins from the novice stage as expressed in the in model where people are taught the rudiments of tasks. Leadership as a process is experienced from the basic leadership skills and levels of leadership roles, graduating to the topmost position where it is expected that a candidate must have obtained a high level of expertise as indicated in the Dreyfus model. In other words, mentoring in academic libraries also means that potential staff are given opportunities to take up leadership roles beginning as sectional heads, unit heads, departmental heads, and College library heads. At this level, it is expected that such staff will have acquired adequate leadership skills and expertise to take up the ultimate university librarian position. So, leadership mentoring

as a process arguably also starts from the novice stage, as the Dreyfus model outlines.

To address research objective three, therefore, qualitative data was collected to find out whether academic libraries have mentoring programmes.

Three out of seven respondents agree or are in favour of mentorship in academic libraries. One of the respondents said that:

In my view, academic libraries in Ghana must put in place mentoring programs to develop leaders from within to take over leadership positions so as not to create a leadership vacuum (respondent 1, 2021)

Other respondents said:
Libraries should start with general mentoring of Staff at all levels, not looking only at the top position (respondent 2, 2021)

It is worth considering the implementation of a succession plan in academic libraries in Ghana. If individuals cannot pull themselves up, perhaps it is helpful to mentor those who have the desire to ascend to leadership positions in future (respondent 4, 2021)

The views of Respondent 1 and Respondent 2 corroborate Agyekum (2020) and Thompson and Yebowaah (2012) as a developmental relationship between an experienced person and a novice, which also find expression in the Dreyfus model of skill acquisition (Dreyfus, 2004).

However, 1 respondent was of the view that academic librarians must be made to go through the rigours of the university's assessment procedures and processes. So that librarians will also earn their respect in the community of academics, thus;

Librarians are academics, not administrators, so must publish to gain respect in academia. It is critical to the future of academic libraries (respondent 1, 2021)

The above expression seems to corroborate Weare (2015), who posits that there is a low likelihood of selecting a candidate from within the library to take over from a retiring librarian. This is because the library has no control over choosing a replacement for retiring librarians. It is the university administration which does the selection, using university-wide criteria which apply to all academic staff of the university.

In the absence of mentoring, academic librarians are allowed to build their capacities through continuous professional development. Some staff are sponsored by the university to undertake further studies through scholarships and study leave with pay. Others attend workshops and conferences as part of their continuous professional development. Because the library has no control over the selection of a candidate to take over staff promotion and leadership positions in the library, the situation poses a challenge to deliberate effort to implement a leadership policy that focuses on building capacity to take over a top leadership role. It is also difficult to even mentor when junior staff do not avail themselves to be mentored

Objective two of the research was to examine whether or not academic libraries in Ghana have succession planning programmes. Current data show that none of the libraries studied has a succession plan programme. The majority of respondents, however, did agree that the implementation of succession plans in academic libraries is a good thing.

The study revealed that the criteria for selecting a university librarian are the same as that for all academic staff of the university. Academic library staff are expected to publish articles in peer-reviewed journals to get a promotion. The opportunity to be appointed to the university librarian's role is open also to both internal and external candidates. As revealed by the study, some of the university librarians were appointed from outside of their current institutions. So mentoring and succession planning has no consideration in selecting university librarians.

The challenge in identifying prospective leaders in academic libraries has been the absence of a leadership succession plan. Data from respondents revealed that librarians get promotions for their efforts, so the lack of self-motivation results in a shortage of a critical mass of potential leaders to take over future leadership roles.

Employees' Preparedness for Selection to Leadership Role

The preparedness of staff at the time of leadership selection is important in determining whether the candidate for the position of librarian will be appointed from within the library or will seek an external candidate. The study examined the next most senior members of staff who were in a position to take over the mantle of leadership when the position becomes vacant. Table 1 indicates that out of 7 university libraries surveyed, 3(42.86%) libraries had Assistant

Librarians as the next most senior staff. There were 3(42.86%) university libraries with staff who were at the deputy librarian level. only one 1(14.28%) library has a senior Assistant librarian as the next most senior staff.

Table 2: The number of libraries and next most senior staff:

	Rank	Frequency	Percentage	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	Assistant Librarian	3	42.86	42.86	42.86
	Deputy Librarian	3	42.86	42.86	85.72
	Senior Assistant Librarian	1	14.28	14.28	100.0
	Total	7	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field data, 2021

Level of Education

The study sought to establish the educational backgrounds of respondents for the position of University Librarian. Out of the 7 heads of university libraries who were interviewed, 4(57.1%) hold Doctorate degrees (PhD) in information studies, and 3(42.8%) have Masters' degrees. In addition to possessing the required degrees, one must have attained the rank of at least a Deputy Librarian or an equivalent of Associate Professorial rank. The result revealed that all seven interviewees meet these requirements. The study indicated that one University Librarian is on a Professor's grade.

Table 3: Qualifications of heads of university libraries

Academic Qualifications	Number
Masters' degree	3
PhD	4
Total	7

Source: Field data, 2021.

The study revealed that there is an increasing desire for young library professionals to acquire higher degrees and climb up the educational ladder. Table 1 above shows this trend, as corroborated by Luna (2012) who indicates that there is a growing mass of young professionals who have acquired MPhil and PhD. What is needed is for this critical mass of staff to get leadership training and experience.

Previous Leadership Roles Before Current University Librarian Position

The researcher inquired about what previous leadership positions the university librarians held. 4(57.1%) out of 7 were head librarians at another university. This means that they were appointed from outside the current organization. In other words, they are not home-grown staff, who rose through the ranks within the same institution. 2(28.6%) have held deputy librarian's positions in the past, and 1(14.3%) each was Acting Librarian and Senior Assistant Librarian respectively.

For example, the following responses were given by 2 university librarians when asked the question if they were appointed from within the library they are heading:

No, I was appointed from outside this organization. The current librarian's position was advertised. So I applied and was invited for an appointment interview. Eventually, I was selected for appointment (respondent 1, 2021)

One said:

I was acting librarian for over two years before my substantive appointment. Even though I was acting, when the position was advertised, I also applied and went through the competitive interview process. I was eventually successful and was appointed to my

substantive position (respondent 3, 2021)

The researcher inquired about the length of time each has spent in the current position as a university Librarian. Except for one respondent, the rest have been at their current post for a relatively shorter period. Only 1(14.3%) respondent has been in the current position for over 12 years. 2(28.6%) respondents have spent four years at their current post. 1(14.3%) the respondent has spent 3 years at the present position, and 2(28.6%) respondents are 2 years old at the current position.

The results show that none of the university librarians is on a post-retirement contract.

Challenges of Identifying Prospective Leaders

The challenge in identifying prospective leaders in academic libraries has been the absence of a leadership succession plan. Data from respondents revealed that librarians get promotions for their effort, so the lack of self-motivation results in a shortage of critical mass of potential leaders to take over future leadership roles.

Summary

Analysis of data shows that with regards to objective one, the selection of university librarian is based on university criteria, and not on any succession plan strategy by the library. Academic library staff have the same criteria for promotion as other members of the university faculty.

Data from respondents also show that none of the libraries studied has a deliberate mentoring and succession planning strategy in place. Even though a good number of respondents agree that putting in place succession plans in academic libraries helps develop future library leaders, a couple of respondents disagree with academic libraries implementing leadership succession plans. The contrary view suggests that individual staff should plan their careers, and not be handpicked for future leadership roles.

For objective three, the basis for the absence of a succession plan strategy in any of the libraries studied is that it is not appropriate for higher institutions of learning such as academic libraries. As one respondent puts it librarians are academics, and not administrators, and therefore must publish for promotion, to gain respect in academia. The view of Aversa (2005) is also relevant in concluding that the responsibility for the individual aspiration of faculty members does not rest on universities to groom prospective leaders

for takeover, rather faculty members are personally responsible for their career advancement.

About study objective four, the challenge of identifying prospective leaders in academic libraries is that suitable candidates at the time of selection or appointment are often not available. This is because prospective candidates do not have adequate qualifications, within the framework of the university selection criteria, to be appointed as University Librarians. For the position of university librarian, prospective candidates must have attained the rank of Deputy Librarian and above. The data for the current study show that out of seven respondents, three have attained the rank of Deputy Librarian. The level of preparedness is low.

There are no separate criteria for appointing a University Librarian in academic libraries in Ghana. Appointment and promotion criteria for academic library employees are the same as those for university faculty.

Leadership continuity in academic libraries in Ghana is not necessarily dependent on any well-thought-out succession plan implementation. So there is practically no such thing as a succession plan strategy in all the libraries studied. As a result of the staff's inability to meet university promotion and appointment requirements for academic staff, many university libraries lack that critical mass of potential candidates for the role of university librarian. There appear to be inadequate scholarly publication activities among academic librarians, for which reason they are unable to rise fast in their career ladder.

The preparedness of academic library staff is inadequate, as few libraries have employees who have attained the rank of Deputy Librarian, which is the minimum qualification for appointment to the university librarian role.

If this trend continues, there will be perpetual gaps in leadership continuity, and the university administration will always search for external candidates to appoint to the position of the university librarian.

Conclusion

The rise to a leadership position in an academic library in Ghana is self-motivated. Individuals are challenged by the existing career growth path criteria established by the university to promote themselves to leadership positions in academic libraries. There is no established succession plan in any Ghanaian university to handpick specific staff to leadership

positions. What can be done to motivate prospective staff, desirous to ascend to leadership positions is to mentor them, giving them opportunities to grow through experience and rise through the ranks to the top. There aren't, and cannot be different promotion criteria from the university-wide policies and criteria to promote academic library staff. Leadership positions in academic libraries remain open for competition to internal and external candidates. It is the position of this paper that consistency in leadership succession in academic libraries in Ghana can be achieved through a well-thought-out staff development plan through mentorship.

Recommendations

The study recommends that:

• Heads of units and departments should encourage younger staff who are novices in the areas of research and scholarly publication. Younger and inexperienced staff should be mentored by way of collaborative research.

• There should be internal policies which encourage/require each staff to publish one peer-reviewed journal article/paper and one conference paper per year to be adopted.

• Given the general university appointment and promotion criteria, individual library staff should aspire to ascend to leadership positions by working hard to meet the established criteria. As the saying goes, in academia, individuals promote themselves.

• Notwithstanding the overarching university appointment and promotion criteria, academic libraries should put in place mentoring programmes to identify prospective leaders.

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