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Research Article

Checking Out Our Workspaces: An Analysis of Negative Work Environment and Burnout Utilizing the Negative Acts Questionnaire and the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory for Academic Librarians

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Abstract

Objective – This study explored the prevalence of and relationship between bullying and burnout among academic librarians. The authors sought to examine three main factors contributing to negative workplace environment caused by bullying and incivility: (1) the employment characteristics of respondents (i.e., tenured, non-tenure track, and others), (2) librarianship as a second (or third) career, and (3) generational differences.

Methods – The researchers administered a survey via professional electronic mailing lists in early spring 2023. Librarians over the age of 18 who hold a Masters of Library Science (MLS) or equivalent degree and were employed in an academic library at the time of taking the survey were eligible to participate. The Negative Acts Questionnaire-Revised (NAQ-R) was used to measure workplace bullying, and the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI) was used to measure workplace burnout. Survey results were analyzed using RStudio.

Results – The responses ($n = 267$) showed the average bullying score was relatively low ($M = 1.57$, $SD = 0.52$), and the average burnout score was middling ($M = 45.68$, $SD = 17.87$). The correlation between the two scores was mild ($r = 0.5$, < 0.001). ANOVAs found no significant difference between NAQ-R scores due to employment type (tenured, non-tenure track, and others; $F_{(6, 260)} = 0.711$, $p = 0.641$), duration of employment ($F_{(5, 261)} = 0.482$, $p = 0.79$), career number ($F_{(4, 262)} = 0.585$, $p = 0.674$), or generational identity ($F_{(5, 261)} = 0.0969$, $p = 0.627$). ANOVAs found no significant difference between CBI scores due to employment type ($F_{(6, 260)} = 1.566$, $p = 0.157$), duration of employment ($F_{(5, 261)} = 1.911$, $p = 0.0929$), career number ($F_{(4, 262)} = 1.398$, $p = 0.235$), or generational identity ($F_{(5, 261)} = 1.511$, $p = 0.187$).

Conclusion – Low to moderate levels of both bullying and burnout were found among academic librarians, but the correlation between the two phenomena was mild. No significant difference was found between employment characteristics, career progression (second or third career), or generational identity and the degree of bullying or burnout experienced. This lack of difference was contrary to researcher predictions and opens the door for further research and understanding of both bullying and burnout among academic librarians.

Introduction

The Center for Disease Control and the Department of Education released the first federal government definition of bullying in 2014, stating that bullying comprises three core elements: unwanted aggressive behaviour, observed or perceived power imbalance, and repetition or high likelihood of repetition of bullying behaviours (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2021). Bullying, unlike other negative acts, is repetitive and has a power imbalance between the perpetrator(s) and the victim. In their most recent survey, the Workplace Bullying Institute found that 30%, an estimated 48.6 million American workers, reported being bullied in the workplace (Namie, 2021).

The World Health Organization described burnout as an "occupational phenomenon" in the eleventh revision of the International Classification of Diseases, stating that the syndrome is a result of "chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed." Much like bullying, burnout consists of three

core elements: feelings of exhaustion or lack of energy, negativity, cynicism and increased mental distance toward one's job, and a reduction in professional efficacy (World Health Organization, 2024).

While librarians have long been aware of the issue of bullying in the workplace, original, primary research on the topic is limited in the published literature (Palmer et al., 2023). Recognizing that public librarians face unique pressures and challenges, this research was limited to experiences of workplace non-physical lateral violence between academic library employees, specifically bullying and burnout experienced by those of an equal or lesser rank than their aggressor.

Literature Review

Academia has been recognized as a place where bullying and uncivil acts thrive, with the unique structural and cultural characteristics of academic institutions contributing to a higher rate of bullying (Keashly & Neuman, 2010). In fact, workplace bullying occurs more frequently in higher education than in the general workforce (Freedman & Vreven, 2016; Hollis, 2017; McKay et al., 2008). While research has established higher education professionals endure workplace bullying in general, and has identified a connection between bullying and burnout, little is known about the effects of bullying and burnout in academic libraries specifically (Liu et al., 2019).

Academic libraries, with service-oriented civility toward library users being part of professional expectations, are places where bullying and incivility have been acknowledged (Motin, 2009). Albro (2022) theorized that conflict is inevitable in workplace relationships and noted the library's organizational decentralization as a contributing factor. Motin (2009) and Freedman and Vreven (2016) suggested that some academic library leadership remain silent or even ignore the problems of incivility, negative acts, and bullying. This action or inaction by library leaders leaves library employees to bear the bullying and cope without support, and low morale becomes a reality that affects retention, attendance, service, and ultimately library mission (Fyn et al., 2019; Kendrick, 2017; Staninger, 2016). The above researchers all recommend fostering a sense of collegiality and communication to positively resolve interpersonal conflicts; however, the authors of this paper have been unable to find peer-reviewed publications that indicate this approach is successful in the academic or health sciences library environment.

Academic librarians have been found to exist in a state of burnout (Ewen, 2022; Wood et al., 2020). While the effects of burnout among librarians have yet to be examined, other service-oriented professions have found that burnout can result in mental and physical health consequences, reduced efficacy among employees, and employee turnover (Ewen, 2022; Walters et al., 2018). Similar effects are observed as a result of bullying (Keashly & Neuman, 2010), raising the question, How do bullying and burnout relate to each other? While there has been some exploration of this combination of phenomena, the connection between the two leaves room for further explanation, as the research that has been conducted has not been generalizable across all disciplines, work situations, and contextual or demographic factors (Giorgi et al., 2016; Liu et al., 2019; Rossiter & Sochos, 2018).

As workforce demographics diversify, conflicts arise and researchers engage with topics of bias, power imbalance, and conflict in the workplace, often with the goal of determining proactive strategies that promote inclusive organizational values and an accepting workplace culture. The questions for this research focused on areas that have previously been overlooked in the above research. The authors of this paper were interested in understanding if generational differences had an impact on self-reported

negative acts or burnout and if second career librarians experienced more or less negative workplace behaviour and more or less burnout.

Today, as many as five generations work together in the professional environment. Studies on this topic highlight changes being made in private sector organizations that include offering continuous training and professional development opportunities for older and longtime employees (Moen et al., 2017), as well as creating a more positive workplace climate (Lagace et al., 2022; Tybjer-Jeppeson et al., 2023). Current library research also explores the communication differences of its multi-generational employees to determine optimal conflict management strategies (Munde & Coonin, 2015; McElfresh & Stark, 2019; Stark & McElfresh, 2020), however the connection between generational stressors and negative acts in academic libraries are not well explored within the library research and merit further exploration.

The career transition phenomenon in this age of globalization and technological evolution differs from the conventional pattern of employment seen in the past. Possibilities, attitudes, and behaviours are also evolving (Sullivan & Al Ariss, 2021). More than any other period of time, people are making career changes across occupations, borders, and markets, such as choosing to work for less money in exchange for work–life balance or working beyond traditional retirement age (Howe et al., 2021). Retirement, once a rite of passage, is now a privilege, and many people are working long into their senior years (Johnson et al., 2017). "Re-careering" is defined in the literature as employment after leaving a long-term career position in a different occupation and is shorthand for the second, third, or more careers in which a worker engages during their lifetime (Helppie-McFall & Sonnega, 2017).

Second career librarians are a combination of novice and expert. They possess the confidence of professional experience, accomplishment, expertise, and well-honed transferable skills intersected with the uncertainty of re-careering. The literature identifies a set of unique challenges and adjustments that can cause stress and confusion for the second career librarian in the academic setting. Herman et al. (2021), in their study exploring the experiences of health professionals transitioning to a second career in academia, describe a three-stage process of starting over as a novice in academia, identifying their role within the organization and the importance of a supportive environment and culture to accomplish this.

Kiner and Safin (2023) identified similarities in the experiences and challenges of second career academic librarians as they transitioned from industry to academia and highlighted the importance of colleagues who took the time to help them. Wakely (2021) differentiates between onboarding and orientation with navigating the "nascent" implicit nature of academic culture. There is a need for continued research on the opportunities and challenges of second career employment in general. For now, we must draw analogies from a diverse group of current research flowing from public and private business and industry (Agyemang, 2019; Herman et al., 2021; Koos & Scheinfeld, 2020; Lo et al., 2017; Mages, 2019).

This study falls within a larger landscape of burnout, bullying, and organizational culture research within library science literature. Negative behaviours, bullying, and mobbing have been called to attention, and studies have described the mechanisms by which bullying occurs and outlined the degree to which these experiences pervade the library profession (Fic & Albro, 2022; Freedman & Vreven, 2016; Staninger, 2016). Fic and Albro (2022) explored counterproductive workplace behaviours among academic LIS professionals and found being in a work environment with even low to moderate levels of the behaviours can result in physical and mental health challenges. Similarly, burnout has been studied as one of the stressors among academic librarians, with inconsistent findings across surveys (Colon-Aguirre & Webb, 2020; Nardine, 2019; Shupe et al., 2015). When burnout has been documented, it has been found to lead to

a variety of physical and mental health issues in addition to negative work-related outcomes (Shupe et al., 2015).

Kendrick (2017) and Kendrick and Damasco's (2019) work on low morale experiences brings together components of this bullying and burnout research into a new exploration of low morale experiences. This work, combined with a body of literature on organizational culture and employee-employer relationships (Albro & McElfresh, 2021; Farrell, 2018; Kaarst-Brown et al., 2004; Martin, 2013), illustrates the eagerness of library professionals to have physically and psychologically safe workplaces. The present study sought to further examine a narrow subset of counterproductive workplace behaviours—specifically, the negative acts that make up workplace bullying—by using a validated measure to allow for a standardization of the research. It then turned toward burnout with another validated measure in hopes of providing a replicable result upon which future research can be built. It went one step further by exploring the correlation between these two phenomena, a relationship that is underexplored but could prove beneficial to understand given the similar negative outcomes of both factors.

Aims

This study sought to explore bullying and burnout in the academic library workplace as it relates to employment characteristics, career status, and generational differences. The authors' main hypothesis was that negative experiences at work (bullying) would correlate to the self-reported burnout of the participants. The authors further theorized that there would be three main factors contributing to the negative workplace environment caused by bullying and incivility: (1) the employment characteristics of respondents (i.e., tenured, non-tenure track, and others), (2) librarianship as a second (or third) career, and (3) generational differences.

The research questions guiding the study were:

1. Do librarians employed with different characteristics (i.e., tenured and others) have different levels of burnout or bullying?
2. Do librarians have different levels of burnout or bullying if librarianship is their first, second, third, or more than third career?
3. Do librarians of different generations have different levels of burnout or bullying?
4. Is there a relationship between the degree of bullying experienced and the degree of burnout present among academic librarians?

Methods

Negative Acts Questionnaire-Revised

The 22-item Negative Acts Questionnaire-Revised (NAQ-R; Einarsen et al., 2009) is widely utilized in research on bullying in the workplace and has been adapted to many languages for international use. The NAQ-R inventory is a validated instrument measuring the frequency of targeted workplace bullying witnessed or experienced by respondents from diverse workplaces within the last 6 months. The NAQ-R measures three domains of bullying: work-related, person-related, and physical aggression (Einarsen et al., 2009). Respondents rate the inventory of common bullying behaviours on a 5-point Likert scale

ranging from never to daily. The Likert responses to all items are averaged to achieve the total score (Baird et al., 2023; Einarsen et al., 2009; Notelaers & Einarsen, 2013; Freedman & Vreven, 2016).

Copenhagen Burnout Inventory

There are a number of validated instruments available to measure burnout, such as the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI), the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI), and the Burnout Assessment Tool (BAT; Demerouti, 1999; Kristensen et al., 2005; Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Schaufeli et al., 2020). The CBI is a tool used specifically to assess occupational burnout. The CBI's strengths lie in its open access, adaptability, and application in a variety of cultural and occupational settings. Since its development in 2005, the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory has been translated into more than eight languages for use in different countries and has been tested for reliability and validity in more than 15 different occupations including academic librarians (Dyrbye et al., 2018; Kristensen et al., 2005; Thrush et al., 2021; Walters et al., 2018; Wood et al., 2020).

The CBI was chosen for use in this study due to its broad applicability, use of multiple dimensions in the scale, and past use in the library field (Wood et al., 2020). This 19-item questionnaire is designed to measure physical and psychological fatigue and exhaustion in three distinct domains: personal burnout, work-related burnout, and client-related burnout. These domains can be utilized to assess burnout independently and in combination. Respondents are provided two different 5-point Likert scale response categories: "To a very low degree" to "To a very high degree" and "Never" to "Always." Each domain's scale is calculated separately using the mean of a 0–100 metric, with response category values attributed 0, 25, 50, 75, or 100. Items are then averaged to reflect a total score (Borritz et al., 2006; Thrush et al., 2021).

Psychosocial Work

House-Made Measures

The authors designed two specific measurements to identify respondents' generational affiliation and delineate their career stage. These measures were a combination of demographic questions (such as birth year and whether library work was their first, second, third, or more career) and Likert-scale questions to gather the participants' perception of how valuable things like perceived age and generational identity are to their overall identity. These perception-based questions were designed to test a secondary research hypothesis that generational identity and re-careering as an academic librarian would have an impact on negative experiences and burnout in the workplace. Questions were minimal in nature to determine if a more detailed investigation using more validated measures would be warranted. Participants were asked to complete these questions in addition to the NAQ-R and CBI.

Survey Development

A survey was developed to explore bullying, burnout, generational experiences, and career stages (Albro et al., 2023). The level of bullying experienced by respondents was measured by the Negative Acts Questionnaire-Revised (NAQ-R; Einarsen et al., 2009). Burnout was measured through the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (Kristensen et al., 2005). Questions were developed specifically for this project regarding generational identity and career stages. Demographic questions to better understand the respondent population were also included.

Ethical Considerations

The survey was turned into a proposed project and submitted to the University of Tennessee, Knoxville (with a reliance agreement from Sacramento State University) and University of Vermont Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) for approval. Exemption status was granted by both institutions (University of Tennessee, Knoxville Institutional Review Board UTK IRB-23-07346-XM-RE; University of Vermont Institutional Review Board CHRBSS (Behavioural): STUDY00002421).

Sample

The survey was distributed to librarians via professional electronic mailing lists primarily serving United States library workers in early spring 2023 (see Appendix A). Librarians over the age of 18 who hold an MLS (Masters of Library Science) or equivalent degree and were employed in an academic library at the time of taking the survey were eligible to participate.

The survey received 369 responses in the month it was available. Of these, 46 responses were not eligible for inclusion due to respondents not being employed in an academic library. Five responses were ineligible due to a lack of MLS or equivalent degree by the respondent. Of the surveys with eligible respondents, 41 were not included due to the NAQ-R being too incomplete for analysis, and 10 were not included due to the CBI being too incomplete for analysis. This resulted in a total of 102 responses (27.6%) not included in the analysis and a final sample size of 267. Descriptive statistics and Pearson correlations were conducted using RStudio Version 4.2.3 (RStudio Team, 2020). A statistical significance level of $\alpha =$ 0.05 was used to determine correlation significance.

A majority of respondents identified as female (68.9%), with 6.4% identifying as male, 4.1% as non-binary, and 20.6% declining to disclose their gender. A majority of respondents resided within the United States (92.1%), which was to be expected with the survey distribution method chosen. An additional 3.7% of respondents resided in Canada and 0.4% in each of Australia and Belgium; 3.4% of respondents declined to provide their country of residence. Most respondents were White (69.3%); 4.9% were multi-racial, 2.3% were Asian, 1.9% were Black or African American, 19.5% declined to provide their race, and 2.3% were of some other race. Appendix B provides a detailed breakdown of respondent demographic characteristics.

The 2017 demographic survey of the American Library Association found that their members were primarily White women, with 81% identifying as female and 86.7% identifying as White (Rosa & Henke, 2017). It should be noted that the responses to the survey for this study found levels of White respondents and women respondents to be about 20 percentage points lower. While the data differ by about a 5-year span, this difference could be due to different category options in the race and gender portions of the survey, allowing people to identify in different ways. It could also account for a shift in the demographics of the profession or for a sample that self-selected to not align with the national population of the profession.

Approximately half of respondents were employed in a non-tenure track role (54.3%), which included both faculty and staff positions. Of the remaining respondents, 19.5% of respondents were tenured, and 15.7% were on the tenure track. Additionally, 1.5% were part-time employees, 1.1% were adjunct employees, and 6.4% were employed in some other arrangement; 1.5% of respondents declined to provide their employment categorization. Regarding respondents' role, 18.4% were department heads, 12.3% were managers, and 7.5% were administrators. The remaining 61.8% were not in any

administrative or managerial role. About one third of respondents indicated that their only work location was on campus (30.0%), while 3.0% only worked remotely, 51.3% had a hybrid work arrangement, and 18.7% declined to provide information about their work location. Further details about respondent employment characteristics can be found in Appendix C.

Respondents were born between 1901 and 1999 (see Appendix D). The mean birth year was 1978, and the median birth year was 1980. A single respondent (0.4%) belonged to the Greatest Generation, and no respondents belonged to the Silent Generation; 17.2% of respondents were Baby Boomers, 33.3% were Generation X, 46.3% were Millennials, and 2.8% were Generation Z.

For a majority of respondents (57.3%), librarianship was their first career. For others, 35.6% were in their second career and 5.2% were in their third; 1.1% of respondents were on a career number greater than three, and 0.7% of respondents declined to provide this information. The duration of time in their career as a librarian was widely varied among respondents (see Appendix E): 19.1% of respondents were in their first five years of their career, 19.5% had been a librarian for 6-10 years, 23.6% for 11-15 years, 11.6% for 16-20 years, and 25.8% for 21 or more years. One respondent declined to provide information on the duration of their career.

Results

Negative Acts Questionnaire-Revised

To analyze the NAQ-R, respondents' answers were converted to numerical format. Responses of "never" were matched to "1" and responses of "daily" were matched to "5," with "now and then," "monthly," and "weekly" falling in between. Scores on the NAQ-R were relatively low (M = 1.57, SD = 0.52), suggesting bullying was rare among this group of respondents. There was some variation among scores on the subscales, with the average work-related bullying score being the highest (M = 1.88, SD = 0.69). This was followed by the average person-related bullying score (M = 1.48, SD = 0.56) and then the physically intimidating bullying scale (M = 1.18, SD = 0.33).

ANOVAs found no significant difference between NAQ-R scores due to employment type (tenured, non-tenure track, and others; $F(6, 260)$ = 0.711, p = 0.641), duration of employment ($F(5, 261)$ = 0.482, p = 0.79), career number ($F(4, 262)$ = 0.585, p = 0.674), or generational identity ($F(5, 261)$ = 0.0969, p = 0.627). While the authors would have liked to see if NAQ-R scores varied by gender, the lack of diversity in gender responses (with 68.9% of respondents identifying as women) did not allow for a meaningfully significant analysis.

Copenhagen Burnout Inventory

The CBI provides standard numerical designations for the responses to its questions. Responses of "always" or "to a very high degree" are scored as 100, while scores of "never/almost never" or "to a very low degree" are scored as 0. The categories in between these extremes ("often" or "to a high degree," "sometimes" or "somewhat," and "seldom" or "to a low degree") decrease in 25-point increments from highest to lowest. The mean score on the CBI was 45.68 (SD = 17.87), suggesting burnout is sometimes present. Personal burnout (M = 54.56, SD = 20.92) and work-related burnout (M = 51.20, SD = 18.53) subscale scores were similar to the mean. Client-related burnout (M = 31.28, SD = 20.98) was slightly lower, suggesting this particular type of burnout was seldomly present. ANOVAs found no significant difference between CBI scores due to employment type (tenured, non-tenure track, and others; $F(6, 260)$ =

1.566, $p = 0.157$), duration of employment ($F(5, 261) = 1.911$, $p = 0.0929$), career number ($F(4, 262) = 1.398$, $p = 0.235$), or generational identity ($F(5, 261) = 1.511$, $p = 0.187$). Once again, the authors were unable to analyze differences in this area due to gender as a result of the lack of gender diversity of the respondents.

Correlation between NAQ-R and CBI

Pearson's product-moment correlation showed a mild association between scores on the NAQ-R and scores on the CBI ($r = 0.5$, $p < 0.001$) (see Figure 1). This correlation was slightly stronger when the work-related bullying subscore was examined on its own in relation to CBI score ($r = 0.56$, $p < 0.001$). This correlation was slightly weaker when the person-related bullying subscore was examined on its own in relation to CBI score ($r = 0.41$, $p < 0.001$). The physically intimidating bullying subscore had the weakest correlation with CBI score ($r = 0.24$, $p < 0.001$).
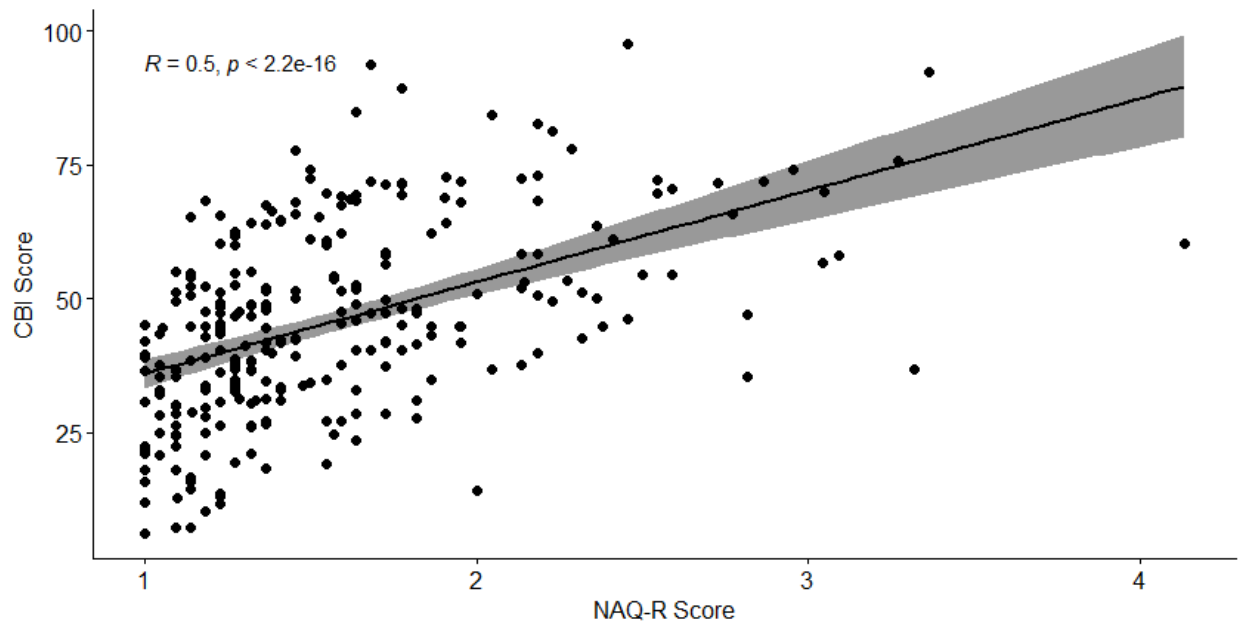

Figure 1
Correlation between NAQ-R score and CBI score.

When NAQ-R scores were related to subscales of the CBI, correlations shifted. The relationships between NAQ-R score and personal burnout ($r = 0.54$, $p < 0.001$) and work-related burnout ($r = 0.54$, $p < 0.001$) subscores were slightly stronger than with the CBI as a whole. The correlation between the NAQ-R and the client-related burnout subscore, however, was weaker ($r = 0.26$, < 0.001).

Discussion

The correlation observed in this study between NAQ-R and the CBI for academic librarians is not reflective of the predicted outcome by the authors, as little statistical significance was found between experiences of lateral violence and burnout. Even when considering specific factors, such as race and time in the profession (factors found to be significant in both previous library-based research as well as research in other professions), the data for this study did not reflect expected findings. There are a

number of factors for why this might be, such as increased librarian turnover (Ewen, 2022) or limitations of this study as discussed below.

When examined independently, however, this study provides evidence of low to moderate levels of bullying and burnout among the academic librarians who participated in this study. While one may view these levels and think anything below a high degree of bullying or burnout is a positive thing, it is important to acknowledge the nature of both bullying and burnout to remain unresolved and linger over time, making even low or moderate levels a risk for the health of both employees and organizations. A body of literature exists elaborating the many ways the two phenomena are detrimental, including physical and mental health complications, decreased work outcomes, and decreased morale (Fic & Albro, 2022; Kendrick, 2017; Kendrick & Damasco, 2019; Shupe et al., 2015).

Negative work experiences, including bullying and burnout, have been linked with a decrease in quality of service among employees in multiple fields (Humborstad et al., 2007; Park & Anh, 2015; Wang, 2020). Studies from the past several decades have shown that despite libraries' best efforts, patrons' recognition of quality service tends to be lower than library workers assume it is (Lilley & Usherwood, 2000; McKnight, 2009; McKnight & Booth, 2010). As demands on libraries, particularly in relation to a need for expanded services (such as evidence synthesis support, data management, increased knowledge of disciplinary standards outside of librarianship, and more), increase, library workers are expected to provide ever-increasing levels of service, with an expectation for continuation of quality. In order to meet these needs while meeting patrons' service expectations, libraries need to enact systemic changes to shift the work environment out of the negative and into a place that does not regularly include burnout and bullying.

Along with a decrease in service quality, a negative library work environment on an academic campus has the potential to impact relationships outside the library. Lower motivation or morale could impede librarians' abilities to build connections with other areas of the university, while campus-wide knowledge of a library-wide negative work environment could cause department leaders and university administrators, in addition to non-administrative faculty and staff, to be hesitant to get involved in collaborations with the library. This has the potential to impact university funding or local grant funding and increase isolation of the library from the rest of the university.

This research informs library practice by providing a base-level understanding of burnout and negative acts experienced in the academic library environment. This research also explored the possible impact of generational differences and second career librarians' experiences with lateral violence and burnout. While there was no significance in generational identity and second career librarianship having an impact on lateral violence and burnout, the information and data presented here can serve as a springboard for future research within the profession to help librarians, library administrations, and professors of library and information science create more welcoming and supportive environments for practitioners within academic institutions. This is particularly important as the librarian profession has high acknowledgement of negative workplace acts within the professional literature, but few to no studies that provide specific information that can be used to make evidence based decisions to prevent bullying and to improve the academic library workplace.

Supervisors, managers, administrators, and other library leaders can use the findings of this study to inform policy making and morale building in their library. The low, but persistent, level of bullying found in libraries suggests a need for clear anti-bullying policies. The moderate level of burnout found in libraries implies there needs to be an adjustment to organizational cultures to address this experience that

contributes to low morale and longstanding fatigue and decreased performance. Combined, the presence of bullying and burnout in libraries signals that librarians are struggling and that there needs to be systemic changes in libraries to lift people out of struggle and help them thrive.

Limitations

This study was limited by capacity for survey design and a relatively small sample size. The sample size for this study was 267, and perhaps a higher response would have provided more power for results. There was no funding for this study, and therefore no incentive for completion, which might have contributed to a smaller response. It is also possible that participants who qualified for this study did not choose to participate in the research due to the nature of the research, i.e., for people experiencing negative acts at work, it might be too difficult to participate in research on the topic.

Conclusion

This study explored bullying, burnout, and contextual factors among academic librarians. Low to moderate levels of both bullying and burnout were found among academic librarians, but the correlation between the two phenomena was mild. No significant difference was found between employment characteristics, career progression (second or third career), or generational identity and the degree of bullying and burnout experienced. This lack of difference was contrary to researcher predictions and opens the door for further research and understanding of both bullying and burnout among academic librarians.

Future Research

Future research should concentrate on including more early career librarians, as there was only a small number of early career librarian respondents to this study, yet we found a slight statistical significance between early career and acts of violence in the workplace. Future research should also consider adding a qualitative research approach to provide subjective data on the lived experiences of librarians. Such data could provide insight on why librarians do not associate experiencing negative acts in the workplace with increased self-reported burnout. It could also prove an interesting area of future research to compare librarianship to other disciplines through use of scales such as the CBI and NAQ-R, which have broad use across a number of fields.

A deeper exploration of the consequences of negative work environments, particularly as they relate to bullying or burnout, would be impactful in communicating to library leadership the toll they might not realize their organizations are facing as a result of their work climate. For instance, the connection between a negative work environment and funding/financial returns has been explored in fields such as human resources (van Veldhoven, 2005). An exploration into this connection in libraries would make clear the financial burden libraries face when work environments are unhealthy. Additional explorations would be valuable in understanding how a negative academic library workplace affects the relationships librarians have with other areas of the university, the inclusion of the library in university-wide initiatives, and the relative isolation of the library from the rest of the university.

Author Contributions

Maggie Albro: Conceptualization (equal), Data curation, Formal analysis, Investigation (equal), Methodology (equal), Writing – original draft (equal), Writing – review & editing (equal) **Rachel Keiko Stark:** Conceptualization (equal), Investigation (equal), Methodology (equal), Writing – original draft (equal), Writing – review & editing (equal) **Kelli Kauffroath:** Conceptualization (equal), Investigation (equal), Methodology (equal), Writing – original draft (equal), Writing – review & editing (equal)

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Appendix A
Electronic Mailing Lists and Discussion Forums for Survey Distribution in Spring 2023

- ACRL College Libraries Section
- ACRL Evidence Synthesis Methods Interest Group
- ACRL Health Sciences Interest Group
- ACRL Members Forum
- ACRL Science and Technology Section
- ACRL University Libraries Section
- ALA Spectrum Forum
- MedLib
- Medical Library Association (MLA) Systematic Reviews
- North Atlantic Health Sciences Libraries, Inc. (NAHSL; MLA Chapter)
- Northern California & Nevada Medical Library Group (NCNMLG; MLA Chapter)

Appendix B
**Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

Characteristic	Number of respondents	% of respondents
Gender		
Female	184	68.9
Male	17	6.4
Non-binary	11	4.1
Declined to respond	55	20.6
Total	267	100.0
Country of residence		
United States	246	92.1
Canada	10	3.7
Australia	1	0.4
Belgium	1	0.4
Declined to respond	9	3.4
Total	267	100.0
Race		
White	185	69.3
Multiple races	13	4.9
Asian	6	2.2
Black	5	1.9
Other	6	2.2
Declined to respond	52	19.5
Total	267	100.0

Appendix C
Employment Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristic	Number of respondents	% of respondents
Employment type		
Non-tenure track	145	54.3
Tenured	52	19.5
Tenure-track	42	15.7
Part-time	4	1.5
Adjunct	3	1.1
Other	17	6.4
Declined to respond	4	1.5
Total	267	100.0
Administrative status		
Department head	49	18.4
Manager	33	12.3
Administrator	20	7.5
None of the above	165	61.8
Total	267	100.0
Work location		
100% on campus	72	27.0
100% remote	8	3.0
Hybrid	137	51.3
Declined to answer	50	18.7
Total	267	100.0

Appendix D
Distribution of Respondents' Birth Years
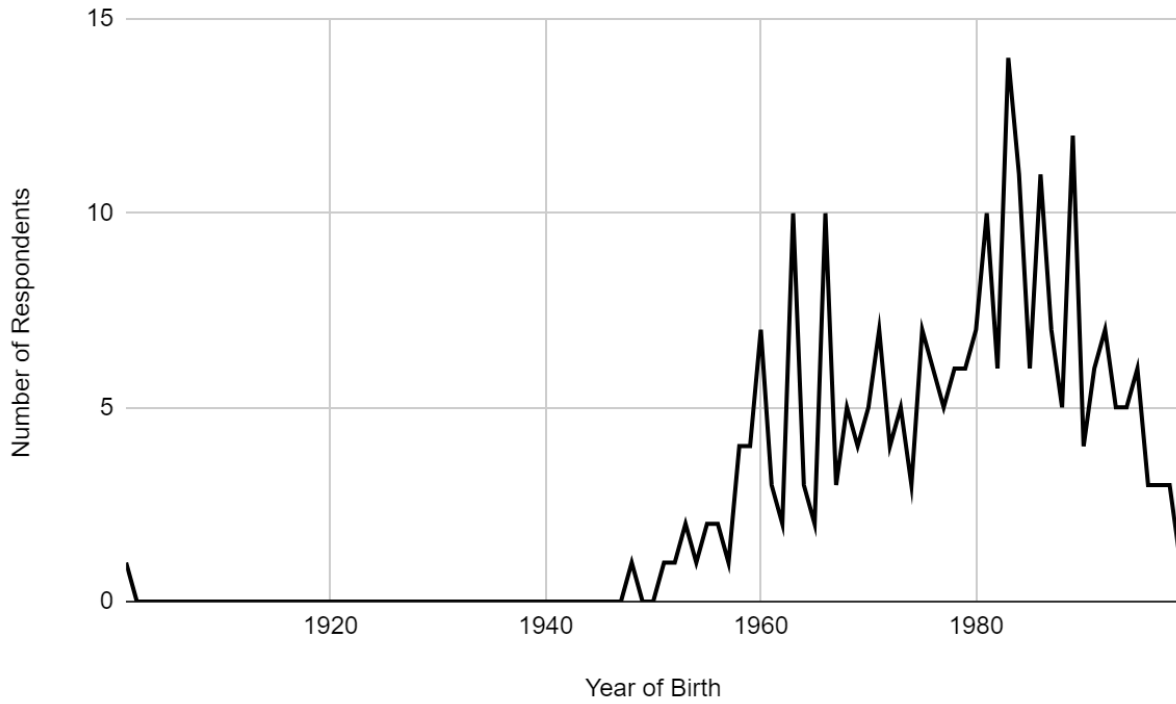
Appendix E
Distribution of Respondents' Librarianship Career Durations