



Coming on board: the perception of newly employed librarians of their integration into academic libraries in Ghana

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Abstract

Academic libraries are essential for achieving the mandate of universities and colleges. These libraries support the teaching, learning, and research pursuits of the institution's staff, faculty, and students. The sustainability of the academic library's mandate largely depends on the caliber of staff employed to work in these spaces. Recruiting and retaining librarians to work in these academic libraries is critical for the continuity and delivery of satisfactory services to the university community. Integrating/onboarding newly employed librarians into academic libraries is essential as these librarians bring new ideas, skills, and perspectives that can help the library adapt to changing user needs and technological advances. This study sought to explore the process of integrating/onboarding newly employed librarians into academic libraries, identify the components of the integration/onboarding processes, and assess newly employed librarians' perception of the integration/onboarding process on their work in academic libraries. The qualitative approach was employed in the study of integration/onboarding processes and to assess the perception of newly employed librarians of the integration/onboarding processes in academic libraries in Ghana. The purposive sampling technique was used to identify thirteen (13) newly employed professional librarians recruited during the 2021-2024 academic year who had undergone some integration/onboarding processes in their respective libraries. A semi-structured interview schedule guided the face-to-face interviews with the librarians from June 10 to August 09, 2024, lasting about 50 minutes each. The data collected was transcribed and thematically analysed reflexively using Nvivo Software Version 20 to identify codes and themes revealing patterns in the data and dominant themes. Findings from the study showed that academic libraries used meetings, orientations, and rotations as avenues for integrating/onboarding their newly employed librarians. The study also revealed that organizational culture, continuous professional development, teamwork/collaborations, mentorship, and career progression and promotion were discussed. From the study, the newly employed librarians perceived the integration/onboarding process to help build their interpersonal relations and develop a sense of acceptance and belonging, making them want to do their best to ensure the success of the academic library and their respective universities..

Keywords: academic libraries, integration, onboarding, newly employed librarians, qualitative, mentorship, continuous professional development, teamwork, collaboration.

Introduction

Academic libraries are essential to achieving the mandate of universities and colleges. These libraries are pivotal in providing research support, information, and services to the students, faculty, and the entire university community. Academic libraries play a crucial role in the academic success of students and faculty in universities and colleges by collecting, organizing, and providing access to information resources and preserving and providing access to the institution's cultural heritage. Additionally, they offer services in support of the teaching, learning, and research pursuits of the academic community. The sustainability of the academic library's mandate within the university community largely depends on the caliber of staff employed to work in these spaces. Recruitment and retention of librarians to work in these academic libraries is critical to the continuity and quality of services provided to the university community and the achievement of the university's mandate. With the increasing complexity of academic library operations and the rapid changes in the academic world, academic libraries must recruit and integrate staff properly into their new environment to increase staff retention.

Librarians are critical to the effective operation of academic libraries. They manage the library's resources, develop programs, and deliver services and instructions to users. Recruiting and retaining qualified librarians is vital to the success of academic libraries. With the mandatory annual retirement of experienced librarians and the increasing complexity of library operations, there is a growing demand for new librarians to take up the responsibility of providing library services.

Integrating newly employed librarians into academic libraries is essential to the success of the library and the academic institution. Newly employed librarians bring new ideas, skills, and perspectives that can help the library adapt to changing user needs and technological advances. They also contribute to the professional development of the library and the academic institution. However, these newly employed librarians may need more knowledge and skills to perform their duties effectively, may not be familiar with the academic library's culture and values, and may also need help building relationships with their older colleagues and understanding their roles and responsibilities. Integrating newly employed librarians into academic libraries can be challenging for themselves and their libraries. This has the potential

to produce unmotivated and dissatisfied librarians, which will take a toll on the library and the university's productivity. It is, therefore, imperative for academic libraries to have a keen interest in the process of onboarding/integration of newly employed academic librarians. This study seeks to assess the perception of the integration process undertaken by academic libraries in transitioning their newly employed librarians in Ghana.

Problem Statement

The onboarding/integration of newly employed librarians into academic libraries is a complex process that involves multiple stakeholders, including the librarian, library administration, library staff, and library users. While many studies (Ahmed et al., 2022; Lundberg, 1988; Silverthorne, 2004) have examined the factors that influence the success of this process, more empirical research needs to be done on onboarding/integrating newly employed librarians into academic libraries. Although academic libraries play a crucial role in the academic success of students and faculty in universities and colleges, recruiting and retaining qualified librarians have become a growing challenge for most academic libraries in Ghana (Donkor et al., 2024). Every year, librarians proceed to their mandatory retirement at the age of sixty (60), creating a significant shortage of librarians in academic libraries who need replacements. This need for more librarians can lead to challenges in providing quality library services to users, affecting the academic success of students and faculty. The shortage can also increase workload and burnout for the remaining librarians, decreasing job satisfaction and retention.

This issue is further compounded by the fact that academic libraries face rapid changes in technology and user needs, requiring new skills and expertise from librarians. Integrating newly employed librarians into academic libraries can also pose challenges, as they may require additional experience and knowledge to perform their duties effectively and become more familiar with the academic library's culture and values. They may also face difficulties building relationships with their colleagues and understanding their roles and responsibilities. A study by Miller (2013) found that newly employed librarians often experienced anxiety and stress when integrating into a new academic library, leading to decreased job satisfaction and retention.

Newly employed librarians are also faced with a need for more mentorship and support, which

contributes to the challenges they face during the integration process. Studies show that most new librarians did not have a formal mentor. This situation can lead to feelings of isolation and disconnection from the library team. The lack of mentorship can also result in newly employed librarians not receiving adequate training and support, leading to difficulties navigating the library's policies, procedures, and systems. Furthermore, cultural differences can also pose challenges during the integration of newly employed librarians into academic libraries. Newly employed librarians may come from different cultural backgrounds, making integrating satisfactorily into the academic library's culture challenging (Lorenzetti & Powelson, 2015; Miller, 2013). Cultural differences can lead to communication challenges, misunderstandings, and a lack of connection with colleagues and users.

In summary, the shortage of librarians and the challenges in integrating newly employed librarians into academic libraries can lead to a decrease in the quality of library services and the academic success of students and faculty. The issue of recruiting and retaining qualified librarians and integrating newly employed librarians into academic libraries needs to be addressed to ensure that academic libraries can continue to provide quality services and remain relevant to their university community and users (Miller, 2013; Sare et al., 2012) cannot be overemphasized. This study aimed to evaluate the integration of newly employed academic librarians into their academic libraries.

Objectives of the study

The following objectives guided the study's understanding of integrating newly employed academic librarians into academic libraries in Ghana.

1. To explore the process of integrating newly employed librarians into academic libraries
2. To identify the components of the integration/onboarding processes
3. To assess newly employed librarians' perception of the integration/onboarding process to their work in academic libraries.

Literature review

Academic librarianship is an aspect of the librarianship profession where librarians working in college, university, and tertiary libraries manage and provide access to the information sources needed to support the learning, teaching, and research pursuits of the staff, students, and faculty in the university community (Adu et al., 2016; Miller, 2013). These

academic librarians offer expert advice in curriculum development, library instruction, research, and information provision to support faculty and students in satisfying their research and information needs. The exponential growth in education, the emergence of increased multidisciplinary subjects, and the increased demand for education in tertiary institutions, coupled with the yearly mandatory retirement of older librarians, call for the recruitment and retention of passionate, confident, educated, and motivated librarians to maintain the relevance of the academic library.

Integrating newly employed librarians into academic libraries

An essential feature in retaining motivated and passionate librarians in academic libraries is their integration and onboarding when newly employed. Integrating newly employed academic librarians into the existing workforce in any academic library is critical for their job satisfaction, performance, and retention. Miller (2013) indicates that the first years of employment in the life of a new academic librarian leads to job satisfaction or dissatisfaction, retention or turnover, and high productivity or low productivity. She calls on library administrators and directors to pay critical attention to integrating such librarians into the academic library to help them settle into the profession and increase their retention. The forums for integrating new academic librarians into the academic library include meeting with them, holding orientation programs, and organizing job rotations. During such times, the institution's culture, expectations of the librarian, working conditions, progression and promotion, job identity/role clarification, and interpersonal relations with colleagues are developed, and mentorship is discussed (Henrich & Attebury, 2010; Miller, 2013; O'Reilly et al., 2024).

Components of the integration/onboarding processes

Studies reveal the components of integration/onboarding processes to include a discussion of the institution's organizational culture, expectations of librarians, working conditions, progression and promotion, job identity/role clarification, and interpersonal relations and mentorship (Brillat & Mendez, 2016; Miller, 2013; O'Reilly et al., 2024). Organizational culture is encapsulated under three layers of underlying assumptions and beliefs, norms and values about acceptable attitudes and behaviours,

and artifacts (physical space, dress, language, symbols, etc.). Research shows that organizational culture positively influences performance and, as such, is an emphasized component of integration and onboarding processes (O'Reilly et al., 2024; Schein, 2010). The library's expectations of the workers are critical to their utmost performance and understanding. Establishing the roles and responsibilities, lines of authority, channels of feedback and accountability, sanctions, and rewards helps newly employed librarians adjust to the new environment and their new roles (Miller, 2013). Academic librarians typically perform roles categorized into three, namely: research support role, teaching role, and managerial role/administrative role (Donkor et al., 2024). A discussion of these roles clarifies the job/roles of the librarian and sets the tone for the newly employed librarian.

Working conditions, career progression, and promotion are essential in integrating and onboarding newly employed librarians. Issues of teaching, research and publication, professional and academic status of academic librarians, and tenure must be thoroughly discussed with newly employed librarians (Donkor et al., 2024) to enable them to understand the terrain of academic librarianship. A clear career progression path and viable promotion lines motivate newly employed librarians to be productive at their assignments.

During the transition period, when newly employed academic librarians are learning to adapt to their environment, roles, and responsibilities, congenial relationships and communication with superiors, colleagues, and subordinates play a vital role in their job satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Mentoring by older colleagues is a way of helping newly employed librarians settle into the profession. These mentors, who would have worked in academic libraries for some time and may have gone through several promotions, are adept in research writing and publication and will be invaluable to newly employed librarians. Miller (2013) encourages newly employed academic librarians to see supervisors, colleagues, or peers they trust to build a support network. These mentors can provide insight, occasionally check on the well-being and progress of the newly employed academic librarians, and offer their professional help, advice, and support when needed.

Methodology

The qualitative approach was adopted to understand the integration of newly employed librarians into academic libraries. The qualitative

approach allows the researcher to engage the study's participants in an interview or discussion. This allows the researcher to probe further to determine the meaning of the interviewee's responses, thereby giving a better understanding of the concept (Creswell, 2006). The study's population consisted of three public university libraries in Ghana that recruited professional librarians into their senior member positions within the last three years (i.e., 2021-2024). The purposive sampling technique was used to identify thirteen (13) professional librarians recruited during the 2021-2024 academic year who had undergone some integration/onboarding processes in their respective universities and libraries. Data was collected from the sampled librarians using a semi-structured interview schedule as a guide. The semi-structured interview schedule, designed to gather newly employed librarians' perceptions of their integration and onboarding into their respective academic libraries, consisted of twelve questions. Face-to-face interviews were conducted from June 10 to August 09, 2024, each lasting at least 50 minutes. Follow-up interviews were conducted by telephone from August 14th to 20th, 2024, to clarify issues and ideas that the researchers needed to understand clearly after transcribing the interview data, and to reach interviewees who could not be engaged face-to-face due to their schedules.

Ethical considerations were followed for the study's proper conduct and participants' safety. The researchers did not coerce participants, allowing them to participate at will and opt out of the study at any time. Participants were also assured of their safety and the confidentiality of their information and identity. They were further assured that their responses would only be used for academic purposes. The researchers did not have any conflict of interest and, as such, did not manipulate the data in their favour. Again, the researcher did not acquire any funding for this study. All literary works consulted for this study have been duly acknowledged, and their references have been provided.

Eight respondents, representing a response rate of 61.5%, were interviewed at the end of the data collection period. This was due to the unavailability of the other sampled respondents. Using Nvivo software version 20, the collected data was transcribed and then thematically analyzed reflexively to identify codes and themes, which revealed patterns in the data and dominant themes.

Findings

Sample characteristics

Eight participants (three males and five females) aged between 35 and 50 years were purposively sampled from three university libraries. The majority (n=5) of the participants had an M.A./MPhil qualification in Information Studies, while (n = 3) had a Ph.D. in Information Studies.

Table 1: Characteristics of Participants

Item	Male (n=3)	Female (n=5)
Age group (years)		
35-39	1	2
40-44	2	2
45-50		1
Total	3	5
Academic Qualification		
MA/ MPhil in Information Studies	2	3
Ph. D. in Information Studies	2	1

Themes

In exploring the processes used by academic libraries to integrate and onboard their newly employed librarians into their work environment, which was the study's first objective, using Nvivo software version 20, three dominant themes were identified. These were the use of library tours, orientations, and meetings.

Library Tours

Library tours were among the methods used by university libraries to integrate newly employed librarians into their libraries. These guided tours were undertaken during the first few days after the assumption of duty in their respective libraries (as indicated by all eight (8) study participants). Accordingly, they were taken around the libraries, where they were shown the various departments, sections, and units, and introduced to the staff working there. Library tours are effective in helping newly employed librarians get acquainted with the library environment, as illustrated by a quote from interviewee 2, a female senior member librarian.

'The tour around the library was very beneficial in helping me know my way around the library.'

The library is quite big, and although it will take me some time to know all its corners, the tour has calmed my fears of getting lost here.'

(Interviewee 2, a female senior member librarian)

Orientations

Through orientations, newly employed librarians visit the various sections, units, and departments of their libraries to learn about their roles. They are introduced to the procedures undertaken by the units to carry out their activities and provide services to their users. During these orientations, librarians spend several days ranging between five (5) and ten (10) working days in each unit or section, allowing them to interact and build relationships with other library staff. Interviewee 5, a male senior member librarian, illustrated the use of orientations with this description.

'I was taken through three weeks of orientation at the new library, where I moved from one unit to another. I spent between three (3) and five (5) working days in each unit of the library. This helped me get acquainted with the staff at the library. I also had a fair idea of the work processes in the various units.'

(Interviewee 5, a male senior member librarian)

Meetings

Meetings are formal avenues for discussion among management, seniors, colleagues, and subordinates in an organization. During these meetings, staff members can ask questions, seek clarification, and build cordial relationships. Interviewee 3, a female senior member, said this about using meetings during their onboarding/integration process.

'A meeting was organised with the senior management of the library. During the meeting, senior colleagues offered advice on the library's work, its progression, and the fundamentals of the profession. This helped me understand the academic library system.'

(Interviewee 3, a female senior member librarian)

The study's second objective was to identify the components, specifically, the concepts and activities involved in the integration/onboarding processes. During the integration period, various avenues and forums were utilized to discuss topics including organizational culture, teamwork and collaboration, mentorship, and continuous professional development.

Organisational culture

Organisational culture encompasses the assumptions and beliefs shared by organizational members, including norms, beliefs, language, toolkits, codes, narratives, frameworks, and mental programming. Studies show that organisations do not have a 'culture' but are instead the culture that binds or glues the group together. The organisations' widely shared norms and beliefs, coupled with their coordinated efforts, motivation, and culture, positively influence their performance by minimising inefficiencies. The data collected from the interview revealed organisational culture as a dominant component of the integration/onboarding processes. The newly employed librarians were introduced to the culture of the academic library system, bringing to bear the mission and vision of the libraries as well as the library's expectations of them as librarians working in academic libraries. They were also exposed to the culture and procedure of providing services to users with a specific emphasis on customer service provision. Interviewee 2, a female senior member librarian, indicated that,

'The orientation program effectively introduced me to the library's mission, values, and culture. I was also made aware of the library's expectations of me, my work, and my interaction with its users and clientele.'

(Interviewee 2, a female senior member librarian)

Teamwork/collaboration

Teamwork and collaboration were the dominant competencies of the onboarding process. The study participants mentioned being educated on teamwork and collaboration in the academic library setting. Teamwork and collaboration foster good interpersonal relationships in the workplace and improve productivity. Areas of collaboration and teamwork gleaned from the study include research and publications, providing library instructions to users, and promoting the library's resources and facilities.

Mentorship

Mentorship and the need for newly employed librarians to identify mentors among their older colleagues were also evident in the study. Mentorship in academic librarianship is essential in helping newly employed librarians understand the practice of academic librarianship, career progression, promotion, and continuous professional development, among others. Interviewee 1, a male senior member librarian,

indicated that:

'I have only three years of experience in librarianship and require much guidance in this profession. The subject of mentorship is very dear to me. I have identified a mentor who is helping me set achievable goals for my profession, and I am also being guided in my research writing. My mentor provides me with constructive feedback on my work in the library.'

(Interviewee 1, a male senior member librarian)

Continuous Professional Development

With the exponential rate at which technology evolves, the expansion of the frontiers of knowledge, and the desire for learning, academic librarianship has become increasingly volatile. Professionals in academic libraries must be lifelong learners to remain relevant and support their clientele's information needs. The continuous professional development of the librarian can be achieved through their active participation in the activities of their professional bodies, engagement in formal training and education, exchange programmes with other academic libraries, and attending webinars, workshops, and symposiums. Interviewee 3, a female librarian, asserted that,

'The library supports my participation in training and development opportunities. I was sponsored to attend a week-long international conference for academic libraries, where I gained valuable insights and was inspired. I am also being encouraged by my mentor to pursue a doctorate degree in librarianship since it is a requirement for my career progression. I am happy about the support and guidance I am receiving to shape my career as an academic librarian.'

(Interviewee 3, a female librarian)

Finally, the researchers assessed newly employed librarians' perception of the integration/onboarding process in their work in academic libraries. The findings from the study revealed that all the study participants perceived the integration/onboarding process as effective in helping them integrate into the academic librarian profession. The study participants reported feeling a sense of acceptance and belongingness during the integration and onboarding process. They were also able to navigate physical library spaces and locations and were knowledgeable about where to find the resources and information needed for their work in academic libraries.

Career progression and promotion

Career progression and promotion are vital in any organization. Employees are always eager to know what is expected of them for their promotion and progression at the workplace. The promotion of librarians in academic institutions in Ghana depends mainly on the status of the librarian. Librarians working in academic libraries in Ghana may have a professional or academic status depending on the cadre to which they belong. Whereas librarians with professional status belong to the professional/academic cadre, those with academic status belong to the academic cadre (Donkor et al., 2024). Both cadres have their specific requirements for promotion and career progression. The study's findings revealed that during the onboarding/integration, the specific requirements for promotion and career progression in the two cadres (professional and academic) were explicitly discussed to ensure the newly employed librarians understood them.

Interviewee 3, a female senior member librarian, indicated,

'I have been made to understand what it takes to get promoted. I am going to set myself up to the task so that I can get promoted when the time comes to keep me motivated in this profession.'

(Interviewee 3, a female senior member librarian)

Impact of integration/onboarding

A sense of acceptance and belongingness

Getting integrated into an unfamiliar terrain like an academic library is essential for building interpersonal connections that foster growth and productivity. The study's findings revealed that newly employed librarians who engaged in interactions with other library staff through meetings, in-house job rotations, and workshops during the integration process developed a sense of acceptance and belonging. This process spanned several weeks to months. Interviewee 3, a female senior member librarian, illustrated this by saying.

'I feel welcomed and included by my colleagues since I started working here. I have been given the opportunity to connect with other staff members to learn about their roles.'

(Interviewee 3, a female senior member librarian)

Again, interviewee 8, a male senior librarian, indicated that,

'The orientation program effectively introduced

me to the library, its mission, values, and culture. The orientation helped me feel comfortable and confident in my role.

(Interviewee 8, a male senior librarian)

Navigating physical library spaces and locations

While most academic libraries are characterised by huge buildings mostly spanning several floors, with departments, units, and sections, others also have their libraries scattered across multiple campuses and locations hence the need to be guided in navigating the library's physical spaces and locations. The study revealed that the newly employed librarians were taken on tours around their library to enable them to navigate and know the sections, units, and departments. The study's participants who were employed in libraries scattered on multiple campuses also indicated that they had the opportunity to tour and work in some satellite libraries, allowing them to learn what they do. Interviewee 8, a male senior librarian, stated that,

'I was taken around my library. Although it's quite new and housed in a three-story building, not all its floors are currently in use.'

(Interviewee 8, a male senior librarian)

Interviewee 5, a male senior librarian, indicated that,

'My library is huge. It spans several floors with several units, offices, and spaces. The library tour helped me identify some spaces. Although I am not very conversant with all the spaces, I will gradually find my way around the library. I also visited some satellite libraries, where I stayed for a couple of days. I had good interactions with staff and learned about their duties and the services they provided.'

(Interviewee 5, a male senior librarian)

Locating resources and information needed for their work

The changing information needs and demands among the university's academic community are dynamic and ever-changing. Librarians working in academic libraries require authentic and current information to support the information needs of their clientele. The interviewees indicated that they were educated on the chain of command and authority, the locations and places to go for specific information, and resources to support their work through the integration and onboarding process. Again, they were also introduced to the official communication

channels of their respective libraries, where they could receive authentic information for their work.

Discussion

In understanding the processes of integrating/onboarding newly employed librarians in academic libraries, themes were generated from the data collected through the interviews of the study participants. Using reflexive thematic content analysis, the processes employed by academic libraries in integrating newly employed librarians included the provision of guided library tours, orientation, and meetings. Due to the vast scope of knowledge pursued at universities, colleges, and tertiary institutions, and the prestige associated with library buildings and spaces, most academic libraries are housed in monumental buildings consisting of several floors, campuses, rooms, and spaces (Afrane et al., 2022; Donkor et al., 2023; Shoam & Klain-Gabbay, 2019). Library tours are conducted to assist these newly employed librarians in navigating the library spaces. During these tours, the newly employed librarian is assisted in becoming acquainted with the library's environment. They are taken around the various departments, spaces, locations where materials are housed, offices, and the various campuses that comprise the library.

Additionally, academic library managers and directors use orientation and meetings to engage with their newly employed librarians, introducing them to the library's policies, rules, and regulations, as well as its organizational culture. These librarians are also educated on the library's expectations of them, their roles, and responsibilities, rewards and sanctions, career progression, and promotion, among others. They interact with other senior librarians, colleagues, and subordinates to build relationships through these meetings and orientation. When properly developed, these interpersonal relations enable the newly employed librarian to develop a sense of acceptance and belongingness, which in turn boosts their morale, motivates them to give their best, encourages them to stay longer in the profession, and increases their productivity (Silverthorne, 2004). During the orientations, these librarians receive on-the-job training and rotations across various departments, campuses, and library sections. This enables them to understand the practices and procedures within the library and clarify their role and assignments (Nassani et al., 2024). Academic libraries are particular about their staff's relationship and approach to handling clientele. These libraries keep a friendly and conducive

atmosphere within the library, making it easy for their faculty, staff, and students to patronize their services and use their facilities to derive benefits and remain relevant in the university community (Afrane et al., 2022), and as such, they spend a considerable amount of time integrating newly employed librarians.

Teamwork and collaboration are invaluable to librarianship and indispensable in academic librarianship. The processes of acquisition, processing material, cataloguing, classification, shelving, shelf-reading, answering user queries, and reference services provision can only be achieved with teamwork and collaboration among library staff (capacity building). Developing and maintaining good interpersonal relations among library staff creates a sense of acceptance and belonging, making staff want to contribute to the success and productivity of the library (Adu et al., 2016; Lewis & Lewis, 2006). Mentoring provides guidance and advice to young people or individuals who may need experience in a particular field or endeavor. The mentor provides guidance to the mentee, and this may occur consciously or unconsciously in the workplace.

Moreover, older colleagues may use it as a way of helping newly employed librarians settle into the profession (Donkor et al., 2024). Newly employed academic librarians in Ghana require guidance and advice to align with the professional or academic path for their progression, including research and publication. They also need to understand their job roles, rules and regulations, and the library's functions. Miller (2013) encourages newly employed academic librarians to consult with supervisors, colleagues, or peers they trust to establish a support network. These mentors can provide insight, occasionally check on the well-being and progress of the newly employed academic librarians, and offer their professional help, advice, and support when needed.

The ever-changing academic environment in which the academic library exists requires that academic librarians be life-long learners. They need to be on top of emerging technologies, sources of information, and current trends in librarianship. Undoubtedly, the academic qualifications required from academic librarians at the point of entry have changed from an M.A. in Information Studies to an MPhil in Information Studies (Donkor et al., 2024). The need for an MPhil in information studies or a research degree is to ensure that these librarians are research-inclined to support the research and information of their respective universities' staff, students, and faculty. Webinars, symposiums, conferences, and

workshops are other viable sources of continuous professional development avenues academic librarians use to stay on top of their profession. Promotion and career progression are at the heart of every employee. Promotion is a way of motivating employees to give their best, and a clear progression path makes it easy for them to plan to achieve their desired promotions and reach the peak of their profession. Academic librarians working in academic libraries in Ghana may progress along the professional or academic path in the various public universities. Each progression path has its requirements, some of which include research publications, number of years in service, annual appraisals, and technical papers, among others. Taking newly employed academic librarians through their career progression and promotion requirements sets the tone for them to develop and prepare along those pathways (Donkor et al., 2024) to prevent stagnation, frustrations, demotivation, and employee turnover (Strothmann & Ohler, 2011).

Lastly, in understanding the perception and impact of the integration/onboarding process on newly employed librarians, the study identified the following themes: developing a sense of acceptance and belongingness and the ability to navigate physical library spaces and locations. These newly employed librarians build good working relationships with their superiors, colleagues, and subordinates through the organization of meetings, orientations, and rotations in the various departments within the library. These cordial relationships at the workplace create a sense of acceptance and belonging, boosting the morale and confidence of newly employed librarians who want to contribute their quota to achieve the library's goal. Again, navigating academic libraries' locations, spaces, and facilities can be daunting since these libraries are primarily huge and spread across several locations. The study revealed that through the library tours conducted during the onboarding process, newly employed librarians could navigate their surroundings, boosting their confidence.

Conclusion

The changing educational landscape has revolutionized the practice of academic librarianship. Academic libraries require professional librarians who are competent, knowledgeable, and constantly upgrading their skills and competencies to provide information to faculty, staff, and students. The yearly mandatory retirement of librarians at sixty years creates vacuums and shortages, which calls for recruitment.

Once new professional librarians are employed, library administration must onboard/integrate them into their work environment. The onboarding/integration of these newly employed librarians is critical for their retention and productivity. Through meetings, orientation and job rotations, newly employed librarians are assisted in understanding the organisation's culture, Teamwork/collaboration, identifying mentors, and learning about the importance and opportunities for continuous professional development. Again, these avenues are helpful for discussions on career progression and promotion requirements. Once newly employed librarians are adequately onboarded/integrated into their libraries, gain clarity of their roles and responsibilities, and develop a sense of acceptance and belongingness, they turn to give off their best, translating into productivity and satisfaction on their path and that of the library's users and the entire university community. Once librarians are retained in academic libraries, the information needs of staff, students, and faculty for their study, learning, and research are satisfied.

Recommendations

1. Academic libraries should organize orientation for all newly employed librarians. These orientations should be effectively planned using meetings, job rotations, and library tours to enable newly employed librarians to understand the academic library terrain and maximize their retention and productivity.

2. The onboarding/integration program should center on organizational culture, teamwork, career progression, and promotion.

3. Newly employed librarians should be assisted with mentorship to enable them to navigate the academic library terrain and the structures of universities and tertiary institutions. Mentors can be assigned by the academic library, or these newly employed librarians can be encouraged to identify suitable mentors to guide their work.

4. Administrators and/or directors should help newly employed librarians develop a sense of acceptance and belongingness, feel welcome, and feel comfortable contributing their quota to the development and productivity of the academic library and the university at large.

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