

Professional or Clerical: A Cross-Validation Study

A list of library tasks—of which half were professional and half were nonprofessional—was given to 221 librarians in Michigan, who were asked to indicate which duties absorbed their time. About two-thirds of the total duties reported as performed by these librarians are considered professional. Senior librarians in the public services of academic libraries performed the highest percentage of professional duties, and junior librarians in the technical services of non-academic libraries reported doing the most nonprofessional work.

IN THE SEPTEMBER 1961 issue of the *Library Journal*, Eugene E. Hart and William Griffith reported the results of a study conducted in California to determine the "involvement of professional librarians in nonprofessional duties." This author has cross-validated the original study, using the same questionnaire on a selected sample of Michigan librarians.

A study was recently completed to determine the aptitudinal requirements for professional librarians. The results of this study will be used in the vocational counseling of youth and may attract more qualified young people into the library profession. Hart and Griffith's questionnaire was administered to the librarian sample as part of the job analysis phase of this study, and the results were also analyzed to determine the percent of professional duties performed by various types of librarians. The questionnaire, containing fifty professional and fifty nonprofessional duties randomly distributed, taken primarily from the *ALA Descriptive List of Professional and Non-Professional Duties in Libraries*, was

completed by 221 librarians from the following organizations:

Detroit public library
Wayne County library
Pontiac public library
State of Michigan library
Flint public library
Kent County library
Lansing public library
Wayne State University library
Michigan State University library
University of Michigan library
Grand Rapids public library

Only professional librarians with a minimum of six months' experience were administered the questionnaire. To prevent errors of contamination, the following categories of librarians were considered nontypical and were not included in the analysis of data:

1. State of Michigan librarians
2. Community-service librarians
3. Administrative librarians
4. Librarians of undetermined classification level

Fifty-eight individuals were thus eliminated, leaving a total 163 in the sample.

For the purposes of this cross-validation study, only those duties which li-

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brarians indicated were performed more than three hours per week were considered. The table shows the total number of duties performed by each type of librarian, and the number and per cent of professional duties this included. In analyzing the per cent of professional duties performed, the total sample of 163 was broken into smaller categories to distinguish between various types of librarians. Three basic distinctions are considered: college *vs.* noncollege librarians, "junior" *vs.* "senior" librarians, and public service *vs.* nonpublic service librarians. In the "nonpublic service" category are included catalogers, acquisition librarians, bibliographers, etc. "Junior" librarians are those whose classification level is "assistant librarian" or "librarian I" in their respective organizations. "Senior" librarians are those classified as "Librarian II or above."

As can be seen from the table, approximately two-thirds (weighted mean across all subsamples) of the duties performed by the librarians in this sample are professional. As one might expect, a

greater proportion of professional duties are performed by college librarians than noncollege, by nonpublic service than public service, and by senior librarians than junior librarians. The only exceptions to this rule seem to be the three junior nonpublic service college librarians who indicate no nonprofessional duties and the one junior nonpublic service noncollege librarian who indicates that only four of her nine significant duties are professional. It is obvious that neither of these two samples are large enough for serious consideration.

A word of caution is put forth regarding these findings: an underlying assumption of this study is that the professional and nonprofessional items on the questionnaire represent enough available choices in both areas to obtain a true picture of the proportion of professional duties performed by each participating member. There is reason to believe that this condition has not been met. Catalogers, acquisitions, and technical service librarians almost universal-

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TABLE 1.

SAMPLE	NUMBER IN EACH SAMPLE	TOTAL* DUTIES	PROFESSIONAL DUTIES	PER CENT OF PROF. DUTIES
Total Sample	163	1770	1150	64.97
Total College Sample	58	397	286	72.04
Total Noncollege Sample	105	1373	864	62.93
Total Public Service	114	1559	1002	64.28
Total Nonpublic Service	49	211	148	70.14
Total Junior Librarians	23	253	149	58.89
Total Senior Librarians	140	1517	1001	65.98
College—Public Service	24	274	200	72.9
Noncollege—Public Service	90	1285	802	62.41
College—Nonpublic Service	34	123	86	69.91
Noncollege—Nonpublic Service	15	88	62	70.45
College—Public Service—Junior†	5	35	24	68.57
College—Public Service—Senior	19	239	176	73.64
Noncollege—Public Service—Junior	14	201	113	56.2
Noncollege—Public Service—Senior	76	1084	689	63.56
College—Nonpublic Service—Junior†	3	8	8	100.00
College—Nonpublic Service—Senior	31	115	78	67.82
Noncollege—Nonpublic Service—Junior†	1	9	4	44.44
Noncollege—Nonpublic Service—Senior	14	79	58	73.41

* Total number of items checked as being performed more than three hours per week.

† Sample too small for significance.

Ellsworth writes about school libraries, the reader may well take issue with his thesis that school libraries were moribund until the 1960's. The American Association of School Librarians' *Standards for School Library Programs* was based on levels found through research in good school libraries, yet Ellsworth seems to imply that until 1960 good school libraries were virtually nonexistent.

Ellsworth rightly criticizes the quality of the literature of school librarianship, but at the same time ignores important and influential documents. One publication of great import, and one that would have strengthened his case but which he has not mentioned, is *Responsibilities of State Departments of Education for School Library Services; a Policy Statement* issued by the Council of Chief State Officers in 1961. The council's policy statement, defining the school library as a part of instruction, is one of the most important publications in creating a favorable attitude toward improving school library services. Mr. Ellsworth has overlooked other important contributions to the description of goals for school library programs. Nowhere does he indicate that he is familiar with the writings of Mary Helen Mahar, nor for example, of the original and significant research of Mary V. Gaver.

Ellsworth begins with an enumeration of the factors which have hastened the recent development of school libraries, following with an analysis of "negative forces" which hindered them. Subsequent chapters deal with the proper role and characteristics of school libraries. The book closes with a short look into the future.

Two sections dealing with censorship give disproportionate weight to this problem. The chapter, "The School Library and Community Relations," except for its opening and closing paragraphs, relates exclusively to censorship. More than half of the final chapter is also concerned with censorship and is out of keeping with the tone and method of the rest of the book. If included at all, the final ten pages should have been an appendix.

As a book for school administrators, *The School Library* will be valuable in presenting a modern and lively concept of library service for secondary schools. Since it is a part of a subscription series, "The Library

of Education," in which individual volumes are not sold separately, it may not, however, reach many of the administrators who most need its message. For school administrators seeking a rationale for elementary school library programs, it will not do at all. A book which encompasses school library services at elementary, junior, and senior school levels remains to be written.—Richard L. Darling, *Montgomery County Public Schools, Maryland.* ■■

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and incomplete printing, publishing, and distribution programs are serious. The problems connected with these programs, while not susceptible to easy or cheap solutions, can be overcome provided vigorous, high-level attention is focussed upon them. In any case, their resolution should not be beyond the capacity of a government which can count the number of chickens in Sagadahoc County and send rockets to the moon. ■■

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ly complained that their job duties were not adequately represented among the professional items on the questionnaire. In this case it is not reasonable to expect the proportion of professional duties indicated to be a true representation.

In conclusion, the findings of the study seem to verify the results obtained by Griffith and Hart that librarians probably perform more nonprofessional duties than they should. ■■

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chives has been stimulated by the writing of a history of the university.³⁵ The archival collection in the university archives is as helpful to the historian as the supplementary nonarchival materials attracted to it. ■■

³⁵ Fulmer Mood and Vernon Carstensen, "University Records and Their Relation to General University Administration," *CRL*, XI (October 1950), 339-40.