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This paper examines the current state of organizational diversity and diversity research, with a particular focus on the library science profession. It begins with a definition of diversity and an examination of the demographic and functional characteristics frequently studied by diversity researchers, followed by an explanation of the three main theoretical categories of diversity. A review of the literature on diversity provides the basis for a discussion of the impact of diversity on organizations and the potential positive and negative impacts that result from organizational diversity. This discussion of the general literature on diversity informs a review of the library science research literature and an analysis of the present state of diversity in libraries. Finally, the paper concludes with recommendations regarding important areas for further research.

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AN EXAMINATION OF THE IMPACT OF ORGANIZATIONAL DIVERSITY

by
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Introduction

The United States considers itself a melting pot, a land of opportunity and a place where the “American Dream” is a possibility for everyone. Yet despite these bold ideals, the United States has not always given all people the same chances, particularly minorities and women. The United States has long struggled with issues of diversity and equality and these issues continue to surface, even as the country witnesses an historic presidential primary campaign between Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama. Although both candidates have argued that their campaigns should not be defined by their gender or race, these characteristics continue to be a part of the discussion of their abilities and potential for success. Despite the achievements and progress made by women and minorities, the United States is still a country where every president has been a white male. In a recent speech on the state of race in America Obama noted, “...the issues that have surfaced over the last few weeks reflect the complexities of race in this country that we’ve never really worked through -- a part of our union that we have yet to perfect.” He added that today America is in “...a racial stalemate we have been stuck in for years.”(Obama 2008)

The issues of diversity are not going to go away or dissipate, in fact the U.S. population is becoming more diverse. Currently 45% of the U.S. population is non-White, Hispanic/Latino or foreign born and by 2014, 36% of the U.S. workforce will be a racial or ethnic minority. (Hunter 2007) From 2004 to 2014 the Hispanic labor force is

expected to grow by 34%, the Asian labor force by 32%, the African American labor force by 17% and the female labor force by 14%. (Ward-Johnson 2007) By the end of this century demographers predict that there will be no majority race in the United States (Jasinowski 2000) Given these realities, organizations need to be prepared to recruit, hire and manage a diverse workforce. Managers and administrators need to be educated on the value of diversity and the benefits it brings to an organization. In particular, they must be aware of the potential negative effects of diversity so that they can be avoided or minimized, as well as recognizing the situations and factors under which diversity results in the greatest organizational benefits.

Simply hiring a range of minority employees will not always help an organization reap the benefits of diversity, particularly if all of these employees are found in lower level positions. In 1995, the Federal Glass Ceiling Commission reported that racial minorities were disproportionately represented in low-wage, low-prestige, and dead-end jobs. (Zatzick, Elvira and Cohen 2003) There needs to be an effort to hire minorities at all levels and to ensure that all individuals have an equal opportunity for promotion based on their on the job performance. Even though most firms now recognize the value of diversity and are trying to recruit diverse employees, the U.S. corporate culture is still based on white male norms (Koonce 2001). Psychological and philosophical managerial models are not universal, but deeply rooted in the dominant culture. (Duchatelet 2001) According to Martine Duchatelet (2001) there is a tendency of managers to invest in individuals whose personality traits best mesh with the prevailing culture and to ignore or suppress those who are different. Corporate culture will have to change before all individuals are truly on equal footing. In order for these changes to be made, individuals

in positions of power must truly understand the value that diversity can bring to their organization and why they will be left behind if they continue to follow their current path.

This paper examines the current state of organizational diversity and diversity research, with a particular focus on the library science profession. It begins with a definition of diversity and an examination of the demographic and functional characteristics frequently studied by diversity researchers, followed by an explanation of the three main theoretical categories of diversity. A review of the literature on diversity provides the basis for a discussion of the impact of diversity on organizations and the potential positive and negative impacts that result from organizational diversity. This discussion of the general literature on diversity informs a review of the library science research literature and an analysis of the present state of diversity in libraries. Finally, the paper concludes with recommendations regarding important areas for further research.

Diversity Defined

Before beginning a discussion of the impact of organizational diversity, it is necessary to understand the concept of diversity itself. Diversity, or heterogeneity, can be defined as “distribution of differences among the members of a unit with respect to a common attribute, X, such as tenure, ethnicity, conscientiousness, task attitude or pay.” (Harrison and Klein 2007, 1200) Diversity requires comparison; an individual in isolation cannot be diverse nor can a group or team be diverse in its own right. A group is only diverse with respect to specific characteristics of its members. (Harrison and Klein 2007) An assessment of a group’s level of diversity requires a thorough examination of all of the characteristics on which group members may potentially differ. The definition

of diversity is straightforward, but in practice assessing and analyzing diversity is very complex.

In diversity research, researchers study primary, or static, characteristics and secondary, or mobile, characteristics. Primary characteristics are inherent characteristics, that is, individuals have no control over these things about themselves. Included among the primary characteristics are demographic, or identity, characteristics such as race, ethnicity, gender and age. (Coats, Goodwin and Bangs 2000) Secondary characteristics of diversity can change throughout an individual's lifetime. These include religion, military experience, language skills, marital status and education. (Coats, Goodwin and Bangs 2000) For the most part, secondary characteristics are not visible to observers making them harder to measure and study. Also included in this category are measures of cognitive, or functional diversity. People have different perspectives, ways of seeing problems, and different heuristics, ways of looking for solutions to problems. (Page 2007)

Race and ethnicity are two demographic characteristics that are particularly complex and merit further discussion. While the two terms are often used interchangeably, they are actually distinct constructs and it is important to understand the differences between the two. Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary defines race as "a category of humankind that shares certain distinctive physical traits" and ethnic as "of or relating to large groups of people classed according to common racial, national, tribal, religious, linguistic, or cultural origin or background." Race is the result of genetics, but ethnicity encompasses far more than this. This is a distinction that is easier to understand with an example. While many people may think that Hispanic and Arab are races, the

U.S. Census considers both of these to be ethnic groups. Anyone who reports ancestry in a Spanish-speaking country is classified as Hispanic and anyone who reports ancestry in an Arabic-speaking country is classified as Arab. These individuals could be of any race. Results of the 2000 Census show that 80% Arabs are white and 17% are white and another a race. (El Nasser 2003) Researchers looking to study ethnicity must be sure to probe further into individual's backgrounds and take care not to classify subjects based on physical appearance alone.

The most commonly studied forms of diversity have been demographic characteristics: age, gender and race. (Harrison, Price and Bell 1998) Demographic characteristics are studied frequently because they are both easily measured by researchers and easily perceived by members of the group being studied. In addition most laws dealing with equal opportunity, and underrepresentation, have focused on these types of characteristics, driving research in that direction. Researchers must be careful when designing studies of demographic diversity. Since the differences are visual and relatively easy to observe it may be easy to overlook some of the less obvious complexities. In fact, demographic characteristics often have the potential to encompass one or more of these categories and depending on the situation, demographic characteristics can realistically be conceptualized as separation, variety or disparity diversity. (Harrison and Klein 2007)

To complicate matters, primary and secondary characteristics are often intertwined and not easily separated or divided. One area where this intersection occurs is culture. Culture is composed of language, religion, customs and politics. Customs can cover style of dress/wardrobe, diet, gender roles, and business practices. (Ricaud 2006)

There is cultural diversity when “people with distinct and different group affiliations of cultural significance are found within a larger group or organization.” (Richard, Murthi and Ismail 2007, 1213) While in theory individuals have the potential to change any of these four characteristics about themselves, culture is also closely tied to a person’s inherent identity and upbringing and not easily altered. Cultural diversity is often linked to identity diversity, but it is much more complex than surface level characteristics. Two individuals of the same race can have very different cultural backgrounds. Hofstede measures and classifies national culture according to the ways of handling social inequality, relationships between individuals and the group, definitions of gender roles and ways of dealing with uncertainty. (Duchatelet 2001) Even where a national culture can be identified, there are still sub-groups with substantially different cultural identities. (Duchatelet 2001) While race, ethnicity and culture may be closely intertwined, managers must be careful not to make assumptions about culture based on observable characteristics.

Functional diversity is another secondary characteristic that is linked to primary characteristics. Although the attributes of cognitive or functional diversity do not directly relate to identity differences, they often correlate. People’s perspectives and heuristics are the result of education, training and life experiences. Page (2007) argues that our view of the world “is informed and influenced by our values, our identities, and our cultures.” (9) This world view influences how individuals approach problems and search for solutions. As a result, diverse identities often lead to diverse perspectives and heuristics. (Page 2007)

Group Dynamics

When evaluating diversity, it is also important to consider group composition. Groups with identical demographic characteristics can have very different dynamics, depending on how the characteristics are distributed among group members. (Lau and Murnighan 1998) A group with a 30-year-old African American male, 30-year-old Caucasian male and 50-year-old African American female will behave differently from a group that is composed of two 30-year-old African American males and a 50-year-old Caucasian female. Lau and Murnighan (1998) propose that researchers must examine the diversity of individual attributes and the possible group faultlines. Faultlines are “the hypothetical dividing lines that may split a group into subgroups based on one or more attributes.” (328) The strength of these faultlines depends on the number of individual attributes present in group members, the alignment of these attributes within individuals and the number of potentially homogenous subgroups. Subgroups, indicators of potential faultlines, frequently form on the basis of demographic characteristics. These types of subgroups tend to develop when groups first form, based on preconceived notions and prejudices of group members. If subgroup formation can be prevented initially then the importance of demographic differences tends to fade over time as group members have a chance to get to know each other as individuals, rather than categories. (Lau and Murnighan 1998) Faultlines can magnify the conflict within groups and cause a marked increase in the negative results of diversity. They are strongest when there are only two subgroups and weakest when there is the possibility of multiple subgroups forming.

Regardless of the type of diversity being studied, it is important to understand and recognize minimum, moderate and maximum diversity in groups. It is relatively easy to

define minimal diversity, this occurs when all members of a group have the same attribute and there is no variation. (Harrison and Klein 2007) It is much more difficult to rank different groups in terms of their diversity or to define maximum diversity. Is diversity maximized when there is even distribution of the possible manifestations of a given attribute, such as when every group member is of a different race? Or is diversity maximized when members are evenly divided between two extreme manifestations of the attribute in question, such as a group composed of capitalists and communists? Or is maximum diversity achieved when one member of a group is at one extreme and all of the other members of a group are at the other extreme, such as a group with a CEO and several unpaid interns? (Harrison and Klein 2007) All of these scenarios can be examples of maximum diversity, depending on the type of diversity that is being studied. Moderate diversity varies depending on the characteristic being examined and the expression of maximum diversity for that characteristic. It is easier to understand and discuss both moderate and maximum diversity when looking at specific scenarios or situations, rather than in the abstract.

Categories of Diversity

There are three main categories of diversity at a theoretical level: separation, variety and disparity diversity. In brief, separation diversity deals with position, variety diversity deals with information and disparity diversity deals with possession. (Harrison and Klein 2007) Separation diversity relates to differences in values, beliefs and attitudes. Minimum separation is present when all members of a group hold the same position on a given issue, or there is total agreement within the group. On the other hand, separation diversity in a group is at a maximum when group members are equally split

between two extreme and opposing ideas. With maximum separation diversity the two groups are as far apart as possible, at two extreme ends of the spectrum, with no middle ground. Moderate separation occurs when the members of the group occupy a range of positions along the possible spectrum. (Klein and Harrison 2007; Harrison and Klein 2007) Variety diversity relates to differences in knowledge, experience and networking connections. Minimum variety occurs when all members have the same knowledge. Once an individual with unique knowledge joins a homogenous group there is variety diversity. Unlike separation diversity, there are no extremes within the possible expressions of the attributes of variety diversity. Group members can be distributed at a variety of points along the continuum, but there are no high or low points, no points that are opposite one another. Group variety is at a maximum when every member of the group has unique knowledge, ideas or connections. (Klein and Harrison 2007; Harrison and Klein 2007) The third form of diversity, disparity diversity, relates to the distribution of resources within a group. These resources could include power, wealth, tenure or any other resources that would influence an individual's standing in the group. A group has minimum disparity when all members of a group have an equal amount of the group's resources. Maximum disparity occurs when one group member outranks all others. Disparity diversity is asymmetric, that is, disparity is high if the majority of the resources are held by 10% of a group and low if the majority of the resources are held by 90% of the group. (Klein and Harrison 2007; Harrison and Klein 2007)

The three categories of diversity are distinct and also have different impacts on group communication, interaction and performance. Previous studies have shown that lower levels of separation diversity result in more cooperation, trust and social integration

among group members and higher levels of separation diversity often result in higher levels of conflict and poor performance. (Harrison and Klein 2007) Research on variety diversity found that groups with higher levels of variety make more effective decisions and tend to produce more creative products than homogenous groups. When there is maximum variety, members are more open and receptive to the ideas of other group members because everyone has a unique perspective. With a moderate level of variety diversity, there is the possibility that members will divide into subgroups and be less willing to share information or discuss viewpoints held by smaller subgroups. (Harrison and Klein 2007) Groups with high levels of disparity diversity can have problems with the flow of information because of distractions over the distribution of resources. In addition, in groups with high levels of disparity, individuals with the most resources can have undue influence on group decisions and actions. (Harrison and Klein 2007)

While each category of diversity is unique, they frequently are present simultaneously. The presence of one type of diversity in a group can lead to the formation of another type of diversity within that group. Separation diversity has the potential to lead to increased variety diversity. When group members are separated, they are often motivated to seek more information to support their position or to recruit other individuals to the group who hold their point of view, thus increasing the group's variety. Conversely, variety diversity can also lead to increased separation. Individuals with different backgrounds and knowledge are likely to have different attitudes and beliefs, or separation. However, the closer a group is to maximum variety, the less likely there is to be high separation, since it is unlikely that individuals with a range of knowledge and experience would hold only two opposing viewpoints. Disparity diversity can lead to

increases in both separation and variety diversity. Differences in resource distribution can result in different attitudes and values among those individuals with different levels of resources. Power and rank may also influence the networking contacts of group members, which is another form of variety diversity. (Harrison and Klein 2007) The three types of diversity may also interact and moderate or accentuate the predicted group outcomes. In short, the interaction between the three categories of diversity is ever present and complex.

Measuring Diversity

Unfortunately, it is not easy to move from an understanding of the three diversity constructs to a real world study of diversity. The three categories of diversity do not directly correlate with the different forms of demographic or functional diversity that are so frequently studied by researchers. For this reason, it is important for researchers to clearly explain their interpretation of diversity and the type of diversity that they are studying so that the results are meaningful, and useful, for future researchers. It is also important to make this determination at the outset of a study so that the research design reflects the type of diversity being studied and does not result in improper operationalization or incorrect conclusions. (Harrison and Klein 2007) Harrison and Klein (2007) recommend that scholars interested in demographic diversity examine the relationship of variables within groups prior to beginning their overall study. This will help them to assess the type of diversity they are studying and select the proper methodology for their experiment.

General Impact of Organizational Diversity

Diversity in organizations has been linked to a range of benefits, from concrete measures such as strong stock performance or higher return on equity to a variety of intangible benefits. These intangibles include increased adaptability, a broader service range, and a variety of viewpoints. (Ward-Johnson 2007) Individuals with different racial, ethnic or religious backgrounds have different life experiences and backgrounds. These experiences play a large role in personal development and, as a result, individuals from diverse groups tend to bring different perspectives to a group and to the decision making process. Though this is not always the case, diverse individuals tend to study problems differently and suggest solutions drawn from their individual knowledge base and prior observations. The combination of several diverse perspectives leads to a greater possibility for creativity and innovation. The more ideas that are thrown into the mix, the more likely a new, creative solution will emerge. The value generated by a diverse group of employees is difficult for another organization to reproduce because it would be nearly impossible for them to form a second group with an identical mix of perspectives. (Richard 2000) Another advantage of diverse groups is that they are often able to avoid the problem of “groupthink,” which occurs when group members place a premium on maintaining group cohesiveness and avoid critical thinking. (Cox and Blake 1991) Groupthink is more likely to occur in homogeneous groups where no one wants to stand out or go against the majority opinion. In diverse groups there is less likely to be an overwhelming majority that dominates the discussion, so this problem is less likely to take root. In a diverse environment, group members are able to express their opinions and debate proposed solutions.

Unfortunately, not all of the results of increased organizational diversity are positive. In groups made up of different individuals there may be distrust or conflict. Individuals may enter into the group with preconceived ideas or may just feel more comfortable interacting with people who look and think like they do. Multiple studies have documented negative outcomes associated with organizational diversity. All three categories of diversity have the potential to cause problems depending on group dynamics and the distribution of differences among group members. Separation diversity can have negative effects on group cohesion, coordination and morale, while disparity diversity affects group power dynamics and can result in lower participation and information sharing among group members. Those members of the group without a share of the resources can feel that they are unable to express their opinions or make their voice heard. (Klein and Harrison 2007) When the three types of diversity exist within a single group, the benefits of variety may not be realized. Individuals with different knowledge may also have varying levels of power or different attitudes about key issues. This can result in individuals who are less open to listening to others' opinions and can limit the potential benefits of variety. (Klein and Harrison 2007)

Impact of Diversity on Group Processes

The value of diverse perspectives in decision-making teams is one of the greatest benefits of diversity. Individuals from different cultural, racial and educational backgrounds bring different knowledge and a range of different life experiences to the table. Hong and Page (2004) set up a study to analyze the role of functional diversity in problem solving teams. In particular, they focused on the differences between how different people analyze problems and the steps they take to solve them. At the

conclusion of the study, Hong and Page found that a random group of ten individuals drawn from a large population set tend to outperform a group of the ten individuals ranked highest on ability from the same set. These results were repeated when the group sizes were increased to 20 individuals, but the difference in performance between the two groups was smaller. With a larger size, the group of the best individuals automatically became more diverse and came closer to matching the performance of the random group. While functional diversity often correlates with different types of identity diversity, there are other issues that can arise with identity-diverse groups that were not taken into consideration here. Despite this limitation Hong and Page's study highlights the inherent value of diverse perspectives in problem solving situations.

One of the frequently cited problems of diversity is that it can cause tension and conflict at the group level. Studies have shown that diversity can have a negative effect on group cohesion, reduce the frequency or quantity of group communication and increase conflict (Knight et al. 1999) Knight, et al. (1999) studied the effects of diversity on strategic consensus in top management teams (TMT). Both functional diversity and educational diversity were found to have a negative effect on strategic consensus, while there was a positive relationship between employment tenure diversity and strategic consensus. Overall, diversity was found to have direct and indirect effects on strategic consensus, with primarily negative effects. The authors report that their conclusions support previous studies showing that diversity is negatively related to consensus and that diversity influences group processes. The findings show that some aspects of diversity may increase interpersonal conflict and as a result, have a negative impact on strategic consensus because of a reduction in agreement-seeking behaviors. Other studies have

shown that high levels of diversity reduce agreement-seeking behavior and social cohesion in groups. (Richard, et al. 2004)

Perceived differences may cause just as many problems in groups as actual differences. An individual's perceived differences from team members influences his or her attitude and behavior and can have a strong negative effect on group performance and cohesion. Age dissimilarity has been associated with less communication, poorer work group fit, less innovation, a greater rate of absences, and higher turnover. (Williams, Parker and Turner 2007) Work-style diversity is harder to measure and quantify since it is a deep-level characteristic that is not readily apparent to group members, but it has been shown to be negatively related to group identification, liking, job satisfaction, group citizenship and group performance. (Williams, Parker and Turner 2007) Williams, Parker and Turner (2007) tested the effects of age and work-style dissimilarities on the extent to which team members were able to take the perspective of other team members. Perspective taking is important for team function because it often leads to work-load sharing and reduced conflict and can influence team effectiveness. The authors found that age dissimilarity did not have an effect on either positive attributions or empathy, the two measures of perspective taking recorded. However, work-style dissimilarity was shown to have a negative effect on both of these indicators. Perceived work-style dissimilarity also seemed to moderate the effect of perceived age dissimilarity. Within groups with high work-style dissimilarity there was no effect of perceived age dissimilarity on perspective taking, but in low work-dissimilarity groups there was a negative relationship between perceived age dissimilarity and the indicators of perspective taking. These results suggest that studies of surface-level dissimilarities are

not enough to provide an adequate theory of the effects of diversity, or dissimilarity, on group behavior and performance. The correlation between perceived age dissimilarity and perceived work-style dissimilarity highlight the importance of investigating the interactions between different types of dissimilarities.

Financial Impact of Diversity

Research undertaken in the private sector has shown that companies that are ranked highly for diversity are also ranked as highly successful companies overall. While the exact nature of this relationship is not clearly defined, studies have shown there is a positive correlation between diversity and organizational success. One way this success is demonstrated is through stock performance, where studies have shown that companies identified as diverse have matched or outperformed the S&P 500. Other studies have found correlations between the diversity of a company's leadership and its stock performance (Colvin 1999; Kuczynski 1999). Further investigation has shown that, in fact, firms recognized for their diversity efforts perform better than similar firms in the same industries during the years preceding their recognition on the *Fortune* and *Diversity Inc.* lists. (Weigand 2007) These lists are compiled and the rankings calculated by evaluating companies on their overall work-force demographics, the race/ethnicity and gender of managers at all levels, retention rates by race/ethnicity and gender, the diversity of the suppliers they work with and whether or not the company offers loans or financial assistance to suppliers owned by women or minorities. Compared to the unrecognized firms, the diversity award winners have larger market capitalization, assets and sales, as well as higher profit margins, return on assets, return on equity and economic-value. (Weigand 2007)

Although studies have shown that increased diversity results in increased firm performance, this does not necessarily translate into benefits or profits for shareholders. Weigand (2007) found that firms included on *Fortune* and *Diversity Inc's* lists recognizing diversity initiatives and the matching firms he selected for the sake of comparison earned returns for stockholders that were appropriate for the level of risk. The diversity firms did not earn additional profits for shareholders and there appeared to be no significant difference in risk between the stocks of the diversity and matching firms. While this is not necessarily a negative, since stockholders are not losing money, it may hurt firms trying to gain support for implementing diversity strategies that will cost the firm money. Shareholders may not see a reason to support such spending if they do not believe it will ultimately benefit them.

The relationship between organizational diversity and organizational success is not quite as straightforward as an increase in minority employees resulting in increased profits. The beneficial effects of diversity needed to be examined in the context of a given organization and are more likely to be realized when the organizational culture is compatible with a diverse workforce. (Richard et al. 2003) Richard (2000) saw no direct positive association between cultural and racial diversity and firm performance, however, there was a significant relationship when the growth strategy of the firms was taken into account. Richard (2000) found that “in association with growth, racial diversity enhances productivity, and this relationship intensifies as strategic growth increases.” (171) In summary, in firms with the same level of racial diversity, those with a growth strategy experienced a higher return on equity (ROE) than firms with no growth strategy or a downsizing strategy. Another study showed that innovativeness, like a growth strategy,

enhances the positive effects of racial diversity. (Richard et al. 2003) These studies show that the effect of racial diversity on organizational success is often conditional. In a study of banks, racial diversity improved overall performance in banks pursuing innovation strategies, but actually resulted in decreased performance in those with low levels of innovation. (Richard et al. 2003)

Diversity can also have negative effects on the risk taking or proactiveness of organizational groups. A study of bank executives by Richard et al. (2004) revealed that risk taking or proactiveness had a negative moderating effect on the relationship between racial diversity and return on equity, but not productivity. This negative relationship was even stronger when considering the relationship between gender heterogeneity and productivity and was marginally significant for return on equity. Given that a risk taking or proactive firm strategy requires a high level of trust and communication between members of a given management group, it is not surprising that it has a negative effect on the relationship between both racial and gender heterogeneity and performance standards. One of the problems of diverse groups is that there are inherent trust issues to be overcome when individuals work with others whom they consider different from themselves.

Even with an understanding of some of the factors mediating the effects of diversity on organizational performance, the effects are still complicated to interpret. Depending on the type of diversity being studied, the results may be very different. For example, in the context of racial diversity, innovativeness significantly and positively moderated the relationship with firm performance when measuring both productivity and return on equity, but the same positive correlation was not present in the context of

gender diversity. In fact, subsequent studies found that although there is a positive relationship, innovation only marginally moderated the relationship with productivity and had no effect with regards to return on equity when looking at gender diversity. (Richard et al. 2004)

Impact of Leadership Diversity

There are also benefits associated with diversity in organizational management, benefits that might not be realized when diversity is only found in the lower levels of a company. Roberson and Park (2006) found a curvilinear relationship between leader racial diversity and firm financial performance. Lower levels of minority representation caused a decrease in firm financial performance to a point (approximately 20-25% representation), but increases beyond 25% representation were associated with improved financial performance. These findings suggest that racial diversity in leadership may “similarly affect firms’ ability to generate revenue, income, and stock price premiums.” (563) While there will be an eventual cap on growth, continuing to increase leadership diversity can only benefit organizations. These results also show that at certain levels, organizational leadership diversity can also cause conflict and a decrease in performance. With low levels of diversity, below 22%, there is a greater possibility that subgroups will form among the management group. When such alliances are formed, individuals are less likely to be receptive to new ideas or be willing to compromise their position. This study indicates that companies that are just starting to diversify their leadership will face challenges and initial negative results. Organizations that are unaware of the results of Roberson and Park’s study are likely to be discouraged by the initial results and may

move away from diversity rather than trying to move towards a more diverse leadership group.

Value of Diversity Reputation

In addition to the benefits provided by diversity itself, firms may also benefit from gaining a reputation as a diversity leader or as a firm that welcomes minorities. Roberson and Park (2007) probed further into this relationship by looking at the effect of a company's diversity reputation on firm performance. They studied the performance of companies the year after they were included on *Fortune* magazine's list of best companies for minorities and found that firms on *Fortune's* list had a lower book-to-market ratio when compared to similar companies not on the list, which indicates a higher firm value. Roberson and Park did not find a relationship between a firm's diversity reputation and its revenue or net income. The economic benefits of being recognized as a diversity leader "may primarily derive from capital rather than product markets." (563) While companies recognized on these lists have the capital needed to be successful, they may not necessarily have the individuals in place to turn this capital into organizational growth and increased profits. Still, this additional capital means that these companies have increased potential for future success.

Another benefit of diversity reputation is that minorities may choose to frequent establishments that they believe are supportive of minority employees. This is particularly important in public service companies, when employees become the face of the company. A diverse group of employees can make all customers feel welcome, generate new ideas about how to market to their peers and help to bring in new customers or revenue sources. When Avon Corporation gave more control to Black and Hispanic

managers in inner-city markets they were able to turn around formerly unprofitable areas into some of Avon's most productive sectors. (Cox and Blake 1991) This type of result is more likely to occur in companies in the service sector, rather than the manufacturing sector. (Richard, Murthi and Ismail 2007) In the service sector minority employees often work directly with the public and consumers may make decisions based on the "face" of the company that they see. It is harder for consumers to know if a manufacturing company is welcoming to minorities.

Value of Diversity in Academia

While the studies discussed looked at private industry, Winston (2001) found that these relationships hold up when studying diversity and organizational success in an academic environment. By analyzing an available data set, the *U.S. News and World Reports* college rankings, Winston (2001) found that institutions ranked highly on measures of diversity were also ranked highly on measures of organizational success. These results indicate that there should be clear motivations and incentives for academic organizations to pursue diverse candidates and to develop a more diverse culture and organizational climate. These institutions have a responsibility to provide an example for students and to prepare individuals to function and thrive in a diverse society. (Winston 1998)

Why the Potential Benefits of Diversity Outweigh the Potential Negatives

Increasing organizational diversity can have both positive and negative effects, so it is important that organizations be aware of all the issues so that managers can take the necessary steps to reap the positive benefits of diversity and overcome the negative ones. It is especially important to educate managers and leaders to the fact that the majority of

the negative consequences of diversity seem to occur in groups with low levels of diversity. Most of the negatives seem to dissipate as the level of diversity increases, so leaders need to be patient when first implementing a diversity plan. Time seems to be another factor, as negative effects of diversity appear to lessen over time. This is another argument in favor of patience and allowing employees to work through some of the initial problems.

The attitudes and actions of those with the greatest status and power, and potentially the most to lose, can have a great impact on whether or not group diversity results in positive or negative outcomes. The negative results of disparity diversity can be minimized if the individuals with the most status and power maintain an impartial position during group deliberations and discussions. They must refrain from supporting a particular view early on in the process because their endorsement could unduly influence the decision-making process. (Klein and Harrison 2007) In addition, it is the role of the team leader to recognize the different types of diversity present in the group and steer discussions in such a way that potential negative effects are avoided.

While studies have shown that group diversity can cause conflict, it is important for firms to take the time to invest in diverse employees and give them the time to integrate with the group. The effects of diversity can change over time and vary depending on the time period studied. Richard, Murthi and Ismail (2007) found that diversity has a non-linear effect on short-term firm performance and a positive, linear effect when examining performance over a longer time period. These results indicate that some of the negative effects of diversity, perhaps based on misunderstanding, initial perceptions or stereotypes, can be overcome after groups have a chance to work together

and get to know each other as individuals rather than relying on stereotypes or prior experiences. Over time surface level differences, such as age, race or gender, tend to become less important and it is deep-level differences, such as attitudes, beliefs and values, are the most influential in groups. (Harrison, Price, Bell 1998) Employees need a chance to get to know each other and move beyond initial prejudices in order to form a cohesive group.

It is not enough for firms to simply hire diverse individuals; they must also put into place a plan for diversity management. Diversity management refers to the “systematic and planned commitment by organizations to recruit, retain, reward and promote a heterogeneous mix of employees.” (Ivancevich and Gilbert 2000, 75). Although much has been written on the concept of diversity management, there are only a few research studies that have been conducted that support the claims being made. Ivancevich and Gilbert (2000) argue that there is a need for research with better designs and theoretical frameworks, more sophisticated statistical analysis and studies of diversity management programs over time. Zanoni and Janssens (2007) propose that diversity management is a combination of controls embedded in an organization’s material and discursive structures. Diversity management appears to be relevant to all employees, not just minorities, because when there is a perception of a pro-diversity climate, worker attitudes improve and turnover intentions are lower. (McKay et al. 2007) One of the most important aspects of a diversity management strategy is creating an organizational climate that is welcoming to all employees and encourages individual expressions of diversity. If the overall environment is not welcoming to diversity then it will be impossible for an organization to gain any benefits from its diversity.

Cox and Blake (1991) note that data has shown that managing diversity has reduced absenteeism and turnover costs. Organizations that can reduce voluntary turnover and absences can save money and increase profits. In addition, prior research has shown that racial similarity has been associated with greater satisfaction, improved communication, reduced emotional conflict, and intended and actual turnover. (Linnehan, Chrobot-Mason and Konrad 2006) Zatzick, Elvira and Cohen (2003) found that an individual's likelihood of turnover decreases as the proportion of other employees of that individual's own race increases. In addition, this relationship was non-linear; members of minority groups with small representation received greater benefits from an increase in the number of individuals of their own race than did minorities who were already part of a substantial group. Increasing the proportion of employees of an individual's race in the level above the individual's job also resulted in decreased turnover. McKay, et al. (2007) found that perceptions of a pro-diversity organizational climate result in reduced turnover intentions in all racial groups. Once again, these studies show that merely hiring diverse individuals is not enough. To benefit from diversity, organizations need to create an environment where differences are embraced and all employees have the same opportunities for advancement.

While there may be some negatives associated with initial increases in workforce and leadership diversity, the eventual financial benefits are well documented. The initial decrease in overall performance, however, is the reason that firms should not just "focus on the promotion of racial minorities to leadership positions just to increase leader diversity." (Roberson and Park 2006, 564) Firms must realize that in order to realize the true benefits of diversity there must be a significant minority presence and that diversity

needs to be fully integrated into the decision making process. Knight, et al. (1999) suggest that firms can implement leadership practices to discourage interpersonal conflict, encourage agreement seeking within groups and successfully increase strategic consensus. Simply increasing the racial mix in an organization is not likely to result in immediate improvements; organizations need to ensure the appropriate context and climate to realize the benefits of diversity. (Richard et al. 2003)

When an organization makes a decision to move forward with a new diversity strategy or is considering making organizational changes to increase diversity or change the organizational climate, it is important for management to consider context. Resources and diversity levels that may result in improved performance in one firm can be detrimental to others. Richard's (2000) study of racial diversity and firm performance in the banking industry, illustrates the importance of considering context when reviewing the results of a diversity study or initiative. Richard found that racial diversity was not associated with positive firm performance, but when he factored in the banks' growth strategies, an important relationship emerged. Racial diversity did have a positive effect on performance in banks with growth strategies in place. Other scholars have suggested that organizational culture and structure can serve as moderators of the relationship between cultural diversity and firm performance (Richard, Murthi and Ismail 2007). In addition, when selecting a diversity management strategy, firms must realize that a one size fits all approach may not be successful. McKay et al. (2007) found that members of different minority groups do not respond in the same way to an organization's diversity climate or diversity management strategy.

An organizational culture that is supportive of diversity is crucial to the success of any diversity initiative or management strategy. Organizational leadership must understand the conditions and context under which diversity leads to success in order to harness its potential benefits. The value of diversity often lies in the different perspectives brought to the table by a diverse group of employees, regardless of how they are different. (Page 2007) In order to take advantage of these perspectives, organizations need to create a culture that values diversity and which all employees buy into. Page (2007) argues that when organizations take advantage of the diverse perspectives of their employees they can gain superadditive benefits from their organizational diversity. In this case, diverse heuristics, or different ways for looking for solutions, can lead to a situation where $1+1=3$. If one individual proposes method A for solving a problem and another employee proposes method B, a third problem solving method, C, is created when A and B are combined. Hence, two employees come up with 3 possible solutions to the problem. However, research has shown that in order to realize the benefits of diversity, team members must be aware of the cultural and attitudinal differences of other members. (Cox and Blake 1991) Organizations must also be careful to avoid looking at their demographic composition and making predictions about the impact of demographic differences on attitude and behavior. (Linnehan, Chrobot-Mason and Konrad 2006) It is important to assess each person as an individual, rather than making assumptions based on demographic characteristics. If organizations take heed of these recommendations and foster a climate of acceptance they will be able to take advantage of the benefits of diversity.

What Does This Mean for Libraries?

Studies of how diversity affects organizational performance in libraries have been relatively limited. However, although libraries are rarely compared to corporations or Fortune 500 companies, they are businesses and can benefit from many of the lessons about diversity learned in the corporate world. While most libraries aren't looking to increase profits or improve returns for stockholders, they are looking to improve service to their patrons and develop creative and innovative solutions to everyday problems. In particular, librarians should keep a close eye on studies of the benefits of diversity in the service industry. Librarians are in the business of public service and should pay attention to research from the corporate sector. Diversity in libraries does not just mean hiring minorities and creating a diverse staff. Libraries must also strive to design programs and develop collections that meet the needs of all patrons.

Areas of Diversity Research in Libraries

Within the field of library science, Winston and Li (2000) have identified the primary areas of diversity research as staffing, organizational climate, services and collections. Research in the area of staffing looks at issues of recruitment and retention of diverse individuals, as well as staff training programs and professional development opportunities. Organizational climate is closely related to staffing and the research in this area examines how libraries create and promote a climate of diversity for staff and patrons as well as the measures that are used to improve diversity awareness. Research in the area of library services focuses on how to best design library services to reach and serve a diverse user group. Finally, diversity research in the area of collections assesses the level of diversity within current collections and examines the structure and design of

collection development policies to ensure that collections represent a wide range of perspectives and adequately meet the needs of a library's diverse user population.

(Winston and Li 2000) It is important that studies be done in all of these areas, as they all have an impact on the operation of a library. In order for there to be a better understanding of how diversity affects libraries, there needs to be a broad base of research from which conclusions can be drawn. Such information would give librarians trying to implement diversity initiatives an idea of practices that have been successful and help them to refine their procedures and goals.

The majority of diversity research in library and information science has focused on race and gender, particularly Black and White comparisons. There has been little research that examines issues of ethnicity, culture or language. The professional literature on Latinos and libraries is growing, there is yet to be a significant body of work in this area. There has also been relatively little research looking at services to Arabs and Muslims, two diverse groups whose populations are growing the United States and groups that have faced increased scrutiny in the wake of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Language diversity and the language skills of librarians have also received little discussion in the literature. Given the increasing diversity of the U.S. population, it is not safe for libraries to assume that providing resources and services in English is enough.

Current Demographics

While the profession of librarianship has always promoted open and equal access to information, it has not always been the most diverse profession. There has long been, and still is, a dearth of minorities in the profession. Prior to the 1960s, minorities who

entered the profession faced unwelcoming climates and limited opportunities. They were often allowed to work only with others of the same race. (Gollop 1999) Even today, librarians are overwhelmingly White and do not have many opportunities to interact with colleagues from diverse backgrounds. This can lead to a climate where stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination can prosper. (Shachaf and Horowitz 2006) Minority librarians make up approximately 12% of the population of academic and public librarians. (Kim and Sin 2006) The most underrepresented group is Hispanics when compared with their percentage in the general adult population. Only approximately 2% of librarians are Hispanic; a number that has been relatively constant over several decades. (Güereña and Erazo 2000) Asians and Pacific Islanders are the best represented group, with only a two-tenths difference between their percentage of the general population and their percentage among librarians. (Lance 2005)

The discrepancies between the percentage of minorities groups in the general population and the percentage working in libraries is not nearly as large when examining the ranks of library assistants. For most minority groups the percentages are more or less the same, and Asians are actually overrepresented in the population of library assistants. (Lance 2005) Lance (2005) suggests that some of the problems libraries face in recruiting diverse librarians are not specific to the profession, but are the result of a supply issue. In the case of Hispanics, African Americans and Native Americans, there is only a minimal difference, if at all, between the percentage of individuals with graduate degrees and those who are librarians. This suggests that libraries are doing an adequate job retaining minority librarians, but that minorities are not obtaining graduate degrees in proportion to their numbers in the general population. Regardless of the reasons for the

lack of minority representation in the field, the profession must do more to recruit minorities generally and Library and Information Science (LIS) programs need to adopt strategies to recruit more qualified minority students.

Minorities are not represented equally in all types of libraries. A survey of librarians who are members of REFORMA, the National Association to Promote Library Services to the Spanish Speaking, found that of the Hispanic/Latino respondents, 56% work in public libraries and 30% work in academic libraries. In addition, 56% of these individuals work in urban settings, 22% in suburban settings and only 6% in rural settings. Almost two thirds of the REFORMA members who indicated they were fluent in Spanish worked in public libraries. (Winston and Walstad 2006) As of 1991, when ALA last updated its survey, *Academic and Public Librarians: Data by Race, Ethnicity and Sex*, there were differences in the racial/ethnic breakdown of academic and public library populations. African Americans made up approximately 5% of the population of academic librarians and over 7% of the population of public librarians. Hispanic/Latino librarians made up 1.5% of academic librarians and 2% of public librarians. Asian/Pacific Islanders comprised about 5% of librarians in academic libraries and 3% of the librarians in public libraries. White librarians, on the other hand, made up approximately 87% of both the academic and public librarian populations. (Gollop 1999)

If librarianship is to increase the diversity of its ranks, it must start with its education system. If more minorities do not enter American Library Association (ALA)-accredited LIS schools, then the diversity of professional librarians will not change. As of 2003, only 11.3% of students in enrolled in LIS graduate programs were ethnic minorities. This is significantly lower than the proportion of minorities enrolled in U.S.

graduate schools (26.4%) or in the overall U.S. population (31.3%). (Kim and Sin 2006)

The first step in increasing the numbers of minority students in LIS programs is to study and then refine recruitment efforts. Statistics show that a few programs are doing a significantly better job at recruiting minority students than the rest. In 1991-92, nine schools, out of 58 ALA-accredited programs, accounted for more than half of African American graduates and six schools accounted for almost 64% of Hispanic graduates. The University of Hawaii was responsible for 25% of all Asian and Pacific Island graduates. There was no one school that had large numbers of graduates from multiple minority groups. (McCook and Geist 1993) The 2005 closing of the School of Information and Library Studies at Clark Atlanta University, a historically black university, has added to the difficulty of recruiting African American students. (Stanley 2007) All accredited LIS programs must work harder to recruit minority students, particularly those with the least diverse student populations. If every program increased minority enrollment then the profession as a whole would benefit.

Recruitment

If the profession wants to increase the diversity within its ranks, it must first focus on the steps it is taking to recruit individuals to librarianship. Historically, the focus and emphasis in recruiting has been to increase the number of minorities to reflect the demographics of the U.S. population. While this goal should not be abandoned, it is also important to highlight how increasing staff diversity will help libraries to better serve their diverse patron population. (Neely and Peterson 2007) This shift in emphasis is important because it highlights the value that diverse individuals bring to the profession, rather than strictly focusing on numbers. Administrators throughout the country will be

more likely to consider and hire minority librarians when they realize the benefits to their library, rather than feeling pressure to hire minority librarians to simply change the composition of their staff.

One of the first steps in recruiting minorities to librarianship is increasing awareness of the possibility of librarianship as a career. Many students, regardless of race, do not ever consider becoming a librarian and have no real idea what the profession entails. Previous studies have found that a lack of awareness of the profession and of opportunities in the field of librarianship may be one of the biggest problems in recruitment. (Stanley 2007) McCook and Geist (1993) suggest that recruitment activities should be focused on younger students, perhaps as early as middle school, to introduce the idea of librarianship as a career and promote it as a possibility for all students. In addition, they believe that the profession should reach out to non-traditional students, such as those who went to community college or were members of the military and are looking to transition to civilian life. There is a large segment of the population that is not aware of the opportunities in librarianship and that could be valuable contributors to the field if they were reached. In a series of focus groups with minority undergraduates, library staff, library faculty and current LIS masters students, Mary Stanley (2007) found that librarianship is rarely discussed by career counselors at the high school or college level and librarians are not doing a good job of marketing the profession. Students mentioned that mentoring would aid in the recruitment of minorities to librarianship, as well as established programs or networks that assist with job placement after graduation. One successful program to recruit minorities to librarianship, the Peer Information Counseling Program, has been implemented at several universities across the country.

Minority students are hired by the library and provide reference services to their peers; reducing library anxiety in minority undergraduates and serving as role models for other minority students. (Li 1999; Whitmire 1999) This type of program gives minority students an opportunity to gain practical experience and determine if librarianship might be the career for them.

To improve recruitment efforts and success rates, administrators must speak with minority librarians, minority library students and minorities considering a career in library science to learn what attracted them to the profession and what convinced them to enroll in an LIS program. Kim and Sin (2006) surveyed 182 minority librarians or minority students enrolled in LIS programs to assess the most effective strategies for recruiting and retaining minorities in graduate programs and the profession as a whole. In general, they found that survey participants were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the recruitment and retention efforts made by LIS schools. Financial support and work opportunities were ranked as the most effective recruitment strategies followed by recruitment programs that include tailored advertisements and communications, and personal contacts with minorities in the profession. Winston and Walstad's (2006) survey of REFORMA members indicated the important factors that convinced these librarians to enter the field were the opportunity to enter a service profession and also the chance to serve the Spanish-speaking community.

Increasing incentives such as scholarships, tuition waivers or housing grants for LIS programs can help to recruit more minorities to librarianship. Many minority applicants have outside responsibilities, such as providing family support, that make the full cost of graduate school prohibitive. (McCook and Geist 1993) Currently, there are a

number of scholarships available to encourage minority students to pursue graduate education in information and library science. The Spectrum Initiative, started by ALA in 1997, provides scholarships, mentoring and training programs for minorities and a number of LIS schools have committed to match or supplement scholarship funds. The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) maintains scholarship and recruitment programs such as Knowledge River and PRAXIS (Practice, Reflection, Advocacy, Excellence, Inquiry, Solutions). (Kim and Sin 2006) New scholarship initiatives or increased funding to any of these current programs could help to recruit, and fund, additional minority students considering enrolling in an LIS program.

Another factor that can help with recruitment is diversity among LIS program faculty. A diverse faculty can indicate to minority students that the school is welcoming of diversity and individual faculty members can serve as role models and mentors for these students. The percentage of faculty from racial and ethnic minority groups increased from 13 to 15.5 percent from 1993 to 1996. As of 1995, approximately 16% of LIS doctoral students were from designated minority groups. (Gollop 1999) Unfortunately, while there have been small increases in minorities earning doctoral degrees, the percentage of African Americans and Latinos in LIS faculties has changed very little since the 1960s. (Jaeger and Franklin 2007) While not all doctoral students aspire to faculty positions, if there is to be an increase in faculty diversity, the profession must increase the number of minorities in doctoral programs. An LIS program with a diverse faculty is also in a better position to bring diverse perspectives to the curriculum and to better educate students about serving and meeting the information needs of a diverse population. (Jaeger and Franklin 2007)

Diversity Education

If libraries wish to maintain organizational climates that foster and encourage diversity, they must insure that all librarians are aware of the value of diversity. This education must begin at the graduate level. The need for an organizational climate in libraries that is supportive of diversity is one of the reasons it is becoming increasingly critical for LIS programs to cover diversity and multiculturalism in their curriculum. The U.S. population will only continue to become more diverse and all librarians must be able to work with others who are different from them and to serve a diverse patron population. Minority librarians have many suggestions for how LIS programs can prepare students for work in a diverse multicultural environment. These suggestions included changing the LIS curriculum to incorporate diversity issues and multiculturalism, providing internship opportunities in diverse communities, educating faculty and students on the importance of diversity, hiring diverse faculty and recruiting diverse students. (Kim and Sin 2006; Gollop 1999) In addition to adding courses devoted to diversity and multiculturalism, LIS programs need to make an effort to address these topics in all courses. Increasing the diversity of faculty is crucial to educating students about providing library services to diverse populations. If the profession does not do more to increase faculty diversity, “graduates of LIS Master’s programs will be insufficiently prepared to meet the diverse information needs of and provide inclusive community outreach to all of the cultures that use libraries in the United States.” (Jaeger and Franklin 2007, 22)

Another key aspect to integrating multiculturalism and diversity into LIS program curriculum is providing more opportunities for students to take language courses. Even

though many libraries serve multi-lingual populations, most LIS programs do not offer or encourage language education. Within LIS knowledge of languages has often been dismissed or overlooked. (Jaeger and Franklin 2007) It is time for the profession to realize the importance of language knowledge and give students the opportunity to learn a second language or improve upon their language skills. Studies comparing bilingual and monolingual populations have shown that bilingual individuals have higher levels of divergent thinking and cognitive flexibility. (Cox and Blake, 1991) Not only will librarians with second language skills be able to serve a population that may not be able to benefit from English language services, but their presence on the library staff has the potential to encourage innovation and creative problem solving solutions.

Retention

In general, research results indicate that there has been a greater focus on the recruitment than on the retention of minority librarians. (Winston and Li 2007) However, retention is just as important to the diversity of the profession of librarianship. Once minority students have enrolled in LIS programs, schools must ensure that these students become engaged, graduate and choose to stay in librarianship as a career. As with recruitment, minority students rank financial aid and work opportunities as extremely important factors that influence retention in graduate school. Other factors that minority graduates cite as important for their completion of degrees are climates that are supportive of diversity and working students. (Kim and Sin 2006) LIS programs must develop an environment that is conducive to the success of minority students. (McCook and Geist 1993) Factors that can be critical to developing this climate are many of the same factors that influence recruitment, such as a diverse faculty, a diverse student

population, networking opportunities with minorities in librarianship and courses that address issues of diversity and multiculturalism in librarianship.

To encourage minority librarians to stay in the field, the profession must provide resources to help them become established after their graduation from an LIS program. There need to be cooperative partnerships formed to hire minority graduates. If minorities do not see career opportunities in librarianship or feel that there are not jobs available, they will never choose to enter LIS programs or will choose to leave before graduating. (McCook and Geist 1993) Academic libraries have long been leaders in this area. There are a number of post-graduate residency programs that have been designed to recruit and train minority librarians at institutions such as Cornell University, the University of Michigan and Yale University, among others. These programs provide recent graduates with entry level positions in academic libraries and provide them with the experience they need to succeed professionally. Research has shown that these residency programs are effective for recruiting minority librarians and tend to benefit not only the individual who is hired, but also the libraries that host the programs. (Li 1999)

Professional Development

Professional development opportunities are another crucial factor for retaining minority librarians. Courses, training sessions and meetings allow librarians to gain new skills, network with other professionals and discuss problems or ideas with colleagues. It is important for all employees to have equal access to opportunities to learn new skills and attend professional development sessions. These sessions are also an ideal opportunity for libraries to offer diversity training or send staff to a session that is scheduled by a local organization or library. Libraries can also encourage their own staff

members to develop presentations and give them the opportunity to educate their colleagues on their area of expertise.

An important aspect of professional development is membership and participation in professional organizations. Library organizations, at both the national and local levels, give librarians a chance to meet with other librarians who have the same type of job they do and they provide a forum for discussion of current issues in the field. Professional organizations also give minority librarians an opportunity to interact with peers at other libraries who face similar situations and challenges. This can be particularly important for minority librarians who work in libraries where the staff is not extremely diverse. Professional organizations that welcome and encourage diversity can be important to retaining minority librarians. There are a number of professional organizations affiliated with ALA that focus on minority groups including the American Indian Library Association, Asian/Pacific American Librarians Association, Black Caucus of the American Library Association, the Chinese American Librarians Association and REFORMA.

All of these groups advocate for different populations of patrons and the librarians who serve those populations. They also provide a welcoming and supportive environment for minority librarians. The American Indian Library Association (AILA) was formed in 1979 at a time when there was growing awareness that library services to American Indians were inadequate. AILA's goal is to address the library needs of American Indians and Alaska natives and it strives to educate the library community about Indian cultures, languages and values, as well as the information and library needs of this unique population. (American Indian Library Association) The Asian/Pacific

American Librarians Association (APALA) was founded in 1980 and works to provide a forum for discussing problems encountered by Asian/Pacific American librarians, to recruit and mentor Asian/Pacific American librarians, fund scholarships for Asian/Pacific Americans enrolled in LIS programs and to support and improve library services to Asian/Pacific American communities. (Asian/Pacific American Librarians Association)

The Black Caucus of the American Library Association (BCALA) is the oldest of these groups and was founded in 1970. Its mission is to serve as an advocate for the development and promotion of library services to the African American community and to play a leadership role in the recruitment and professional development of African American librarians. (Black Caucus of the American Library Association)

The Chinese American Librarians Association (CALA) works to provide a forum for communication, discussion and collaboration for Chinese American librarians, recruit Chinese Americans to the field of librarianship and to promote library services to Chinese Americans. (Chinese American Librarians Association)

REFORMA, the national association to promote library and information services to Latinos and the Spanish speaking, lists its goals as the development of Spanish-language library collections, recruitment of bilingual, multicultural individuals to librarianship, the promotion of libraries and librarianship in the Latino community, and advocacy on the behalf of the information needs of Latinos. (REFORMA)

Although all of these organizations advocate for and promote the library and information needs of different groups, their objectives are more similar than different. All of these groups want to make sure that the profession addresses the needs of all patrons, not just the majority, and encourages diversity among its ranks.

Organizational Climate

An organizational climate that is supportive of diversity is essential for diversity initiatives in other areas of the library to be successful. In order to improve organizational climate and educate employees, libraries frequently hold diversity and cultural sensitivity training sessions. Other libraries have created positions for diversity or multicultural officers, established diversity committees or task forces or scheduled programs to educate library staff and increase awareness. (Li 1999) Many libraries also undertake diversity climate surveys to assess the current climate, determine administrative and staff support of diversity, and obtain a clearer picture of the current demographic composition of library employees. (Winston and Li 2000) Unfortunately, some libraries have avoided assessing the diversity climate because administrators worry that it might raise more issues than it would solve. (Coats, Goodwin and Bangs 2000) A diversity climate survey can be an extremely valuable tool in almost every library and it surprising that has not been promoted more in the field or been discussed more frequently in the literature. In order for a library to take effective steps to improve its organizational climate, it must have a good idea of its starting point. An anonymous assessment can help to identify opinions and thoughts that staff members may not wish to share in a face-to-face discussion with a supervisor or colleague. Implementing diversity initiatives can be costly and time-consuming and administrators should not make any investment until they are confident their plan will address the library's problems and needs.

Diversity committees, task forces or officers can play an important role in changing the organizational climate in a library and educating current employees on the importance and value of diversity. Winston and Li (2007) found that the presence of a

diversity committee or diversity officer had an impact on several diversity-related activities in public libraries. First, all libraries surveyed with a diversity officer had a program in place to compare minority representation among library staff, while only 57% of libraries without a diversity officer had such a program. Approximately 60% of libraries had a retention program for minority librarians, but this number increased to 81% in libraries with diversity committees. These individuals or groups have the time and resources to focus on diversity, unlike other librarians who may be overwhelmed by other job-related tasks. Diversity officers or committees can thoroughly examine the current climate and make recommendations to senior administrators about changes in policy, useful training sessions, new hiring practices or other steps that will improve the organizational climate and the library's commitment to diversity.

Public Services

Public services librarians are the face of the library, interacting with patrons on a daily basis. The services they provide range from reference, to circulation, to formal or informal instruction sessions. It is essential for libraries to have multicultural and multiethnic public service staffs, particularly as the United States population continues to diversify. If employees lack experience, or are uncomfortable, working with individuals from different cultures, libraries will not be able to serve the public effectively and may have problems helping their patrons. In areas with large populations of new immigrants, librarians must work with patrons who may have limited English skills and little knowledge about how American libraries work and the types of services they provide. It is important that these librarians are aware of and sensitive to cultural differences that may exist. As with other service industries, it is important for patrons to see librarians

from a range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds so that they feel more comfortable and welcome. (Kim and Sin 2006)

It is very important for public services librarians in academic settings to be comfortable with dealing with students from a range of backgrounds. Librarians must be able to customize their services to provide these students with the best possible assistance and increase their likelihood of overall academic success. Librarians must be trained to deal with an increasingly diverse student population. From 1980 to 1997, Hispanic enrollment in institutions of higher education increased from 472,000 to 1,200,100; Asian or Pacific Islander enrollment increased from 286,000 to 851,000 and African American enrollment increased from 1,033,000 to 1,532,800. (Zoe and DiMartino 2000) In addition, the number of international students attending U.S. institutions of higher education rose from 311,880 in 1980 to 547,867 in 2000. These students come from over 180 countries and have to adjust to a new cultural, linguistic and academic environment. (Curry and Copeman 2005)

In a university environment, the library can play a very crucial role in the academic success of all students, but particularly undergraduates. Academic library programs can be particularly important to the success of minority students. Previous studies have shown that academic library use makes a difference in the retention of minority students and for African American students, use of the campus library for studying can actually predict retention. (Whitmire 1999; Whitmire 2003) A recent study comparing the library use of African American, Asian American, Native American, Latino and White undergraduates found that overall academic library use was relatively similar. Discrepancies emerged, however, when examining specific activities such as

finding needed materials by browsing the stacks, checking citations in items read and checking out books. Most of the undergraduates surveyed reported that they never engaged in these activities, but African American students reported that they occasionally did. When the results from the four minority groups were combined and compared to the results from white students, the students of color did have higher library usage rates.

(Whitmire 2003) Given the importance of academic library use to academic success for all students, but particularly for minority students, it is important for libraries to create a welcoming environment. Librarians must also ensure that all students are educated about the services and resources that the library offers them. If librarians are not properly trained to deal with a diverse student body, or if they do not treat all students equally, they can have a detrimental effect on a student's overall success.

Reference and Instruction

Reference and instruction are two of the more prominent public services. In these two areas librarians help patrons to find the information they need and teach them how to find information on their own. In both reference and instruction, librarians need to be comfortable working with a range of individuals. They need to have the ability to read a patron during the initial interaction and adjust their response accordingly. Instruction librarians must also be sensitive to different learning styles and the prior library experience of patrons and tailor their courses to provide the most appropriate information and deliver that information in the most effective manner.

In addition to traditional in-person and phone reference services, a large number of libraries now offer some type of virtual reference services, either by email or instant messenger, or both. An academic library study of email reference transactions of African

American and Caucasian distance education students found differences in student behavior. African American students tended to send more emails per transaction, on average, and were also more likely to ask for additional help in response to a librarian's follow-up e-mail. Caucasian students asked more technical questions, while African American students asked more topical questions and more known-item questions. The researchers also found that Caucasian students were more likely to ask for help initially, but African American students were more likely to ask the reference librarian for help with other information needs after the initial interaction. (Shachaf and Snyder 2007)

Librarians should be made aware of these differences so that they can adjust their services accordingly. If African American students are hesitant to ask for help then librarians should take steps to encourage them. In the case of distance education students, this might be done through increased advertising or more collaboration with instructors or professors. Librarians also need to pay attention to follow up questions and encourage students to ask additional questions when providing an initial response.

Librarians have an obligation to provide all patrons with an equal level of service, regardless of an individual's race, ethnicity or religion. Shachaf and Horowitz (2006) tested the biases of academic libraries' virtual reference services by sending similar reference queries to libraries using different patron names designed to imply different ethnic groups and religious identities. They found that individuals with African American and Arab names received the worst service, individuals with White Jewish or Christian names received the best service and the service to individuals with Hispanic or Asian names fell somewhere in the middle. Factors used to evaluate the virtual reference service included how many requests were ignored, the librarian's response time, the time

and effort put into responses and whether or not the librarians adhered to professional guidelines for reference service. The results of this study are concerning and indicate that these librarians may need additional diversity or cultural sensitivity training. Depending on the student's information need, the librarian may or may not be able to completely answer the question, but he or she must always strive to provide an equal level of service. In particular, librarians should always adhere to professional guidelines for reference service.

Reference and instruction librarians need to be aware of the challenges faced by non-native English speakers attempting to find and access English language materials. Two areas in particular where non-native English speakers may have difficulty are database searching and information retrieval. Zoe and DiMartino (2001) tested male and female native English speakers and non-native English speakers with East Asian language backgrounds on their ability to retrieve desired information in a full-text database and then had them complete a survey about their experiences. They found that native English speaking males had the lowest levels of dissatisfaction with the search process and their results while East Asian language background males had the highest levels of dissatisfaction, 33% compared to 71%. East Asian speakers of both genders reported a greater need for assistance with developing search strategies, had more difficulty selecting the most relevant files to search and were more likely ask for help in general. (Zoe and DiMartino 2001) Given that database searching requires complex strategy and a high level understanding of a language, it is logical that non-native English speakers would have more difficulties. Librarians need to be trained on these potential problems so that they can design useful tutorials and classes for different groups of

patrons. If libraries have a diverse staff with a range of language abilities then it will be easier to provide training for patrons with different native languages. If librarians know a language and understand its structure then they will be better able to help patrons with that language background complete library tasks in English.

Working with Special Populations

There are certain populations of library patrons with unique circumstances that warrant an additional discussion. For academic libraries a special population is international students, for public and school libraries it is children. Both of these groups have unique needs and librarians who work with them must be aware of their background and the challenges they face. In both cases, diversity training with a focus on different learning styles can be particularly beneficial.

International students face unique challenges in using the library. Many international libraries are set up very differently from U.S. libraries and international students may be unaware of how to use the library or what services are available to them. When surveyed, international students have tended to report higher levels of anxiety about interacting with library staff and overcoming mechanical barriers, such as using library technology. (Curry and Copeman 2005) When it comes to requesting help from reference librarians and finding needed information, language tends to be the greatest obstacle for international students. Reference librarians may have difficulty understanding students because of pronunciation, intonation, speech patterns or enunciation and students may also have trouble expressing their true information in a language that is not their native tongue. Even if the information need is adequately expressed, students may have difficulty understanding the librarian's response. (Curry

and Copeman 2005) In a study conducted in academic libraries in British Columbia, Curry and Copeman (2005) found that an international student “tester” was satisfied or very satisfied with the results 15 out of 20 reference interactions. In most areas that were rated, the librarians performed well and followed the guidelines for reference professionals outlined by such organizations as the Reference and User Services Association (RUSA). One troubling result was that the student felt that in over 50% of the reference interactions she was pushed towards an early conclusion to the interview and either was not able to reveal the full extent of her information need or she did not receive sufficient guidance for further research. (Curry and Copeman 2005) This is concerning because some international students may already have enough difficulties expressing themselves and librarians should make sure to take enough time to learn about the student’s information need. If librarians do not take enough time at this stage of the process then they may not answer the question adequately. There may also be cultural differences among international students that would prevent them from asserting themselves to correct the situation or interrupting the librarian if they felt the librarian wasn’t answering the question properly. Librarians must be able to read the situation and the student and be mindful of possible language or cultural barriers. It is particularly important that the librarian slow down the reference interview process and make sure to conduct a complete needs assessment before moving forward.

Public and school librarians have the opportunity to work with children of all ages and can play a major role in increasing their literacy. Having a diverse staff population may be particularly important in the area of children’s and young adult services. Librarians can serve as role models for children and also play an important role in

fostering their reading development and, possibly, self-esteem. In addition to the need for librarians from minority groups, it is also important for the profession to work to recruit more males to children's librarianship. Male children's librarians can bring a unique perspective to programming and readers advisory services and can help encourage young boys to read and continuing reading as they grow older. (Winston and Dunne 2001) Librarians who enter the field of children's librarianship must be sensitive to the unique needs of children and well versed in the most effective techniques for working with, and teaching, children.

Technical Services

Diversity is also important in the areas of technical services. Although technical services librarians do not interact with patrons on a daily basis, they still need to be comfortable working with diverse individuals and recognize the value of diversity. As mentioned earlier, diverse individuals bring diverse perspectives to groups, which can lead to creative and innovative problem solving solutions. Libraries need to have staff members who have the knowledge and ability to review, select, process and catalog a diverse set of resources that meet the information needs of the library's patrons. While diverse staff can play an important role in the area of technical services, this author could not find any studies looking at the value or benefits of diversity among library staff in technical services.

Language skills can be valuable for librarians working in all areas of technical services. Collection development librarians may need to select resources for a language department at a college or university or chose books that would be used by a local immigrant population. Depending on the library's collection and purchasing decisions,

acquisitions librarians may have to work with vendors from other countries and be familiar with language and book trade industry in that part of the world. Knowledge of a second, or third, language other than English can be particularly important for librarians working in cataloging. The more diverse a library's collection, the more likely it is to have books in a range of languages. There need to be librarians on staff who have a high enough level of comprehension to catalog these materials. Even when there is an option available for copy cataloging, there needs to be a cataloger on staff with the language skills to review the record and confirm that it is correct. If there are no staff members with language skills, libraries can have difficulty obtaining and providing access to non-English language collections.

Collection Development

Collection development is a critical area for diversity in libraries. Librarians should strive to provide the most diverse collection possible within the limits of their budget and mission. Librarians should periodically assess the resources in their collection and determine if there are any particular subject areas or topics that need to be strengthened. Other than in highly specialized or subject-area libraries, librarians should be avoid developing a collection that presents only one opinion on an issue or has resources on only one or two populations. When making selection and purchasing decisions, librarians have an opportunity to provide patrons with a range of resources that will serve their needs, enhance their knowledge, and expose them to a range of topics and opinions.

In academic environments, most programs and majors have an established method for working with libraries to develop collections that support the curriculum. There are

other areas, however, that may not yet have enough support to warrant a major or department, but are of great interest to the student population. Librarians need to be aware of trends on campus and encourage emerging student interests by adding resources to the library's collections that will reflect these interests. Li (1999) chronicles the work of the Diversity Committee at Oberlin College that recognized student interest in Asian American, Hispanic American and Native American studies and secured funding to purchase materials in all of these areas. Public libraries must also keep an eye on the changing interests and information needs of their patrons and modify collection development policies as needed.

Library periodicals and book reviews play an important and influential role in the collection development process. The majority of librarians do not have time to sit down and read every book they are considering buying, but they still need to make informed decisions. Librarians have to rely on publishers' promotional materials and book reviews to make collection development decisions. If there are only reviews available for a limited segment of books then as a result library collections will be restricted. A lack of reviews can be particularly problematic when librarians are trying to build foreign language collections. English language reviews of foreign language books allow librarians to select books that may be beneficial for their patrons, even if they themselves do not know the language. It has only been recently that these types of reviews have been regularly available. Until the 1990s, there were very few periodicals that reviewed Spanish-language or bilingual books. Beginning in 1994 *Library Journal* started a semi-annual review of Spanish-language books titled "En Espanol" and hired its first Spanish book editor. (Güereña and Erazo 2000) These types of reviews are critical for collection

development librarians and the profession should encourage the review of non-English language publications.

Areas for further research

If the library profession hopes to make further strides in the area of diversity then there needs to be an increased dedication to diversity research, in particular diversity research that looks at new populations, skills and areas of practice. Historically, diversity research has focused on African-American and White comparisons (Ivancevich and Gilbert 2000), but as United States society becomes increasingly diverse it becomes more important to look at all minority groups. In the wake of the attacks of September 11, 2001, Muslims and Arabs in the United States have received increased attention and their culture and beliefs have faced increased scrutiny. Since libraries strive to provide the best service to all patrons, it is important to examine how service to Arabs and Muslims has been addressed in the post 9/11 climate.

The importance of studying how libraries are addressing diversity issues related to Arabs and Muslims is twofold. First, libraries have an obligation to serve all patrons, regardless of ethnicity or culture and to do so effectively they need to have a better understanding of the unique needs of these groups. They also have an obligation to provide the general public with a diverse range of information. The role of the library as a source of information has been particularly important in the wake of 9/11, as the public turned to the library to explain the tenets of Islam and the culture of the Middle East. Research shows an overall increase in the use of library collections and services after 9/11, with a focus on information and resources about Islam, Muslims, Arabs and the Middle East. (Novacek 2001) A similar increased interest in these topics was

reflected in sales on Amazon.com. (Nelson 2001) Given that collection development activities support not only the Arab and Muslim populations, but also members of the general public who want to learn about these cultures, there must be a systematic approach to the discussion and handling of these issues.

There is not a large amount of diversity research available that has looked at Arabs or Muslims. There are several likely reasons that this has been the case. First, Arabs fall outside of the prevalent comparison group (African-Americans and whites) and all members of this ethnic group do not share identifying characteristics. The U.S. Census identifies an Arab as anyone who can trace his or her ancestry to an Arabic-speaking country, but these countries differ in terms of their racial and ethnic mix. (Haboush 2007) Thus Arabs are not easily identified by researchers or identified by other members of the groups to which they belong. Muslims are not an ethnic or racial group, but a religious group, making them even more difficult to study. While there are some visible characteristics that identify Muslims, such as head scarves for women, not all Muslims exhibit these characteristics.

It is important for researchers to begin including Arabs and Muslims in their diversity studies and taking a closer look at the unique needs of these groups. The 2000 U.S. Census shows that Arabs numbered 1.2 million in 2000, up 38% since 1990 and up 50% from 1980, the first year the census tracked ancestry. This 38% population growth easily outdistances the 13% growth of the U.S. population as a whole. (El Nasser 2003) The estimates of the Muslim population in the United States range from one to eleven million, with most authorities suggesting that the actual number is between four and six million. (Hodge 2005) With both of these populations on the rise, and in light of the

increase attention they have received as a result of 9/11, it is important that both groups begin to be considered in the diversity research. It is particularly important for librarians to be sensitive to cultural differences and have the knowledge and training base necessary to provide the best service to these populations.

Another area that merits additional study is language, both services to individuals who are not native English speakers and the need for language skills among librarians. There has been very little research that examines library services to individuals whose first language is not English. (Winston and Walstad 2006) Issues of language are particularly complex and librarians must be aware of the potential difficulties encountered by non-native English speakers. Even an explanation of a concept such as Boolean operators may require additional planning and explanation. Many East Asian languages have no constructs such as OR, or function words like prepositions, conjunctions or articles. Tenses, adjectives and adverbs are not defined by variant spellings, but rather by positioning in a sentence. (Zoe and DiMartino 2000) In addition to learning vocabulary for search terms, some individuals may also have to master constructs and language structure that are completely foreign to them. Public librarians may have patrons who speak a number of languages and need to consider how to best serve these groups. One factor that influences services to individuals who speak no English or have limited English skills is the languages spoken by librarians.

There has been little discussion or examination of the language skills of librarians. Winston and Walstad's (2006) survey of librarians who are members of REFORMA is one of the few studies to examine librarian's language skills, in that case Spanish. This author and Mark Winston are currently conducting an assessment of the language skills

of librarians, through a survey of academic, public and school librarians and a review of job ads from 2000 to the present. However, while this study will provide valuable information, there needs to be more research in this area to assess the need for, and value of, language skills in librarians. In the post-9/11 era there has been a push by the federal government to encourage the study of critical languages such as Arabic, Chinese, Korean and Russian, particularly for positions dealing with intelligence and national security. (Zehr 2006; Cutshall 2005) There is a need for librarians or other information professionals in the federal government who can interpret and analyze the information being collected in these languages and provide library and information services in these languages. Outside of the federal government, there need to be librarians in academic environments who can support the research of students studying languages and librarians in public libraries who can assist new immigrants or other non-English speakers. There need to be studies undertaken to determine if librarians are meeting these non-English information needs and if libraries are able to fill positions that require second or third language skills. If such research determines that there are not enough librarians to fill these positions then it will be necessary to assess the LIS curriculum to determine what changes can be made to encourage library and information science graduate students to take language courses. The profession may also need to find new ways to recruit individuals to librarianship who already have these needed language skills.

Finally, there also is a need for comprehensive research that examines the diversity initiatives of libraries in a quantitative, overarching manner. For example, the majority of literature on diversity in public libraries has looked at collections and services, with the articles that address services tending to examine single library

programs that address the needs of a specific local population. (Winston and Li 2007; Rizzuti-Hare, Cavazos and Garcia 2002; Bell 2002; Zelter and Polk 2002; Martin 2002) There has been little comprehensive research that looks at broader diversity initiatives in public libraries. One such survey, administered to members of the Urban Libraries Council, found that these libraries have made efforts to educate staff on diversity issues, recruit diverse candidates for open positions, implement programs that provide library services to diverse groups, done collection assessments and taken steps to diversify collections. (Winston and Li 2007) Such larger research endeavors are needed to obtain a better understanding of the current state of diversity programs and plans in all types of libraries. With more data available, it will be easier to draw conclusions about the types of initiatives that are successful and the steps that can be taken by all libraries to improve diversity throughout the profession.

Conclusion

The research to date has shown that diversity can bring many benefits to an organization. These benefits include increased adaptability, a greater potential for creativity and innovation, better stock performance, greater return on assets and equity, and increased patronage from minority customers. There are some negatives associated with organizational diversity, such as increased group tension or conflict and higher turnover or absences for employees, but most of these negative results tend to occur at lower rates of diversity. When an organization's leadership diversity increases, there is an initial downturn in financial performance, but after the leadership group reaches 22% further increases in diversity as associated with increases in firm performance. (Roberson and Park 2006) Unfortunately, despite an increase in diversity research and training

programs and the continuing presence of anti-discrimination legislation and affirmative action programs, women and minorities are still underrepresented in upper management and other key organizational positions. (Bell and Berry 2007) Managers and administrators need to be educated about the potential benefits of diversity so that they will have further motivation to hire diverse individuals. In addition, they need to understand the potential negative effects of diversity, and when they are likely to occur, so that they can take steps to avoid or minimize these types of results.

While libraries have made progress in the area of diversity, there is still a long way to go. For the profession as a whole to make true progress in the area of diversity, there must be an honest discussion about the issues and an in-depth assessment of the current state of librarianship. Unfortunately, the view of racism in librarianship is very different depending on who you ask. A 1997 study revealed that while the majority of African American, Asian and Latino librarians said racism was just as common as in other professions, White librarians said that racism in librarianship was less prevalent than in other professions. (Howland 1998) This difference in opinion indicates that the profession still needs to make significant strides. Librarians must work to create a professional climate that welcomes and encourages diversity.

As shown in the literature, recruitment is an area requiring particular attention. Neely and Peterson (2007) recommend that the profession as a whole, through professional organizations such as ALA and ACRL, develop and implement an agenda for recruitment and retention of minority librarians that is based on current research and defines reasonable strategic goals. Librarians at all levels and positions, including LIS faculty, must be committed to developing diversity standards and policies on

multiculturalism and information access. In particular, there must be commitment among library and LIS program administrators. (Gollop 1999) Diversity initiatives and desired changes can not succeed if they are not fully endorsed by those with the most resources and influence. Library administrators must be committed to hiring and promotions based on achievement and experience, rather than promoting individuals whose personalities best align with the majority. (Howland 1998) If the profession works to improve recruitment and retention strategies, it can attract qualified minorities to the field and improve the overall diversity of librarianship.

Administrators need to continue to study and assess diversity in their libraries and work to make improvements in the area of staffing, organizational climate, services and collections. They must strive to increase the overall diversity of their libraries and not focus on a single area. If the profession as a whole wants to make steps in improving diversity, there must also be a renewed dedication to diversity research. There needs to be a wealth of data available in order to accurately assess the benefits and negatives of diversity in libraries, as well as the diversity initiatives and plans that are most likely to be successful. Researchers must also expand the focus of their research and move beyond the Black and White comparisons that have been common in the field. Areas that require particular attention are services to Arab and Muslim populations and the language skills of librarians. The diversity of libraries and librarianship is improving, but the profession must constantly push itself to do more and make more positive changes.

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