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Secondary School Librarians as Heads of Department in UK Schools

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Purpose. To study the attitudes of UK head-teachers and of librarians to the view that secondary school librarians should have the status of a head-of-department (HOD).

Design/methodology/approach. Questionnaires sent to 77 secondary schools in Cheshire, UK had response rates of 58% from the librarians and of 49% from the head-teachers, with follow-up interviews being conducted with 15 of the librarians.

Findings. Most librarians were employed as support staff, although many of them were doing a HOD's job; even when a librarian had this title, they did not often receive the recognition appropriate to such a role. Librarians were more likely to have HOD status in the independent schools sector than in the state-maintained sector, and there was some evidence that head-teachers and librarians have different views as to what a librarian's responsibilities should be.

Originality/value. There has been no previous study of this topic in the UK

Keywords. CILIP; Head of department; Librarians' responsibilities; Librarians' status; Secondary school; Secondary school librarian

Type of paper. Research paper

1.   Introduction

There has been much discussion in the literature of the role of secondary school librarians and their status within the school's management structure, with published studies including recommendations and guidelines for the employment of secondary school librarians, discussions of whether librarians should be employed as members of teaching or support staff, and of the relationships between head teachers and secondary school librarians. However, research in these areas is much better established in Canada, the United States and Australia than it has been in the United Kingdom (Ritchie, 2010; Turner *et al*., 2007), where Turner (2006) has suggested that the critical role of the head teacher in quality school library provision and support has not been fully investigated. In similar vein, Ritchie (2010) has

reported a survey of UK school librarian's self-perception of their status, and concluded that there is a need for research into the relationship between head teachers, school management teams, and school librarians, as management had the largest effect on the librarians' self-perceived status.

The present study seeks to address these comments by reporting an investigation of the extent to which secondary school librarians in the UK have "head of department" (hereafter HOD) status within their schools. Specifically, the project described below had the following aims: to identify what it means for a school librarian to have HOD status; to ascertain how many librarians are employed as a HOD; to identify the extent to which the idea that a school librarian should be of HOD status is realistic and feasible, as stated in the job description proposed by the Charted Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP, the UK's professional body for the library profession); to identify the levels of awareness of school librarians and head-teachers of recommendations from CILIP and from the UK government's Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted); to identify any differences of opinion between school librarians and head-teachers as to the roles and responsibilities of the school librarian; and to identify any relationship between the nature of a school and the position of the school librarian within the school's staffing structure. The next two sections provide the background for our work and the research methods that were used, before we present and discuss the extensive results that were obtained.

2.   Background

There are several guidelines and recommendations available regarding the levels of staffing and expertise, and the roles and responsibilities of secondary school librarians in the UK. For example, the CILIP job description for a school librarian states unequivocally that the status is that of an HOD (CILIP, 2008, 2009), and an Ofsted report entitled *Good School Libraries: Making a Difference to Learning* notes the "important middle management roles" of librarians in the best school libraries (Ofsted, 2006). However, it is not clear that these recommendations are followed consistently in UK secondary schools. Valentine and Nelson (1988) noted that HOD status was more likely when school librarians reported directly to their head or deputy head, and while Ofsted and CILIP agree that secondary school librarians should have this status, this is not generally the case in practice (Crosthwaite, 2004). Indeed, inspection of the employment terms and conditions in advertisements for school librarians shows a high degree of variation, with few of the standards evident that characterise the pay, responsibility etc of higher education, research, government and health librarians. In

countries such as the United States and Australia, however, similar standards to the CILIP ones are specified as minimal requirements, as a result of the positive effects on student achievement observed when a school invests in good resources and a qualified specialist librarian (Lance and Loertscher, 2002; Lonsdale, 2003; McCracken, 2001; Scholastic, 2008; Smalley, 2004).

There is disagreement as to whether school librarians should be on the teaching/academic or support/non-academic staffing scales. In the UK, CILIP (2008) suggested that the school librarian should be responsible to the "Head Teacher or Deputy Head in charge of the curriculum", which might be taken to imply a teaching-scale appointment for the librarian is being favoured, although it is not explicit. In its publication, *The Information Powered School*, the American Library Association makes explicit mention of the librarian as teacher when it states that school library media specialists [librarians] "must serve as teachers, staff developers, curriculum planners and instructional leaders" (Hughes-Hassell and Wheelock, 2001). The view that "the librarian is a teacher" is one that dates back very many years (Heller, 1965), but, as the American Association of School Librarians (2010) notes, the US National Centre for Education Statistics still classifies the school librarian as support staff.

The relationship between British school librarians and their head teachers was discussed by Kinnell (1995), who noted that "professional partnerships between teachers and librarians have been problematic", and went on to state that "the partnerships between educators and librarians which promised so much at the very beginning of mandatory secondary education have failed to crystallise into effective support structures". Writing in the same year, Tilke (1995) made much the same point when he stated that "The status of the librarian in a school can be very variable indeed. Horror stories about the treatment of librarians abound" (although he then goes on to emphasise the excellent working relationships in Oakham School where he worked). Both of these studies are by now quite dated; much more recently, Turner *et al*. (2007) have noted at least some continuing concerns about the relationship between senior managers and school librarians (specifically in a large sample of independent schools). The problematic relationship between librarians and teachers is also evident in the USA, with Alexander *et al*. (2003) noting that school principals often perceived their librarians "exclusively as resources for students and teachers who need help with print materials and technology and not as leaders within the school community." A similar divergence of views is evident when teacher librarians comment on "the lack of understanding their administrators and their colleagues have about what is possible" (Zmuda and Harada, 2008). Oberg (2006) provides a review of such studies in the North American context.

3.   Methods

The principal focus of the study was the schools offering education to students aged 11-18 in the geographic locality of Cheshire County Council (since the project was carried out in mid-2009, the Council has split into two: Cheshire East Council; and Cheshire West and Chester County Council). There are 80 such secondary schools, of which the librarians and head-teachers of 77 were approached: the three remaining schools were all extremely small, having ten or less students. The use of all of the schools – independent, state-maintained, large, small, mixed or single sex, with or without sixth form - ensured that there was no bias in the sample, other than that resulting from use of a single county council. Data was collected from the schools in two ways: a postal semi-structured questionnaire was distributed to the librarians and an analogous questionnaire to the head-teachers; and then follow-up interviews were held with some of the school librarians who had responded to the questionnaire. A third source of data was a modified form of the librarians' questionnaire that was sent by email to the School Librarians' Network, with the aim of identifying any potential sources of bias resulting from use of a single county council. These procedures are discussed further below.

Two questionnaires were sent out to each of the 77 Cheshire secondary schools – one to the librarian and one to the head-teacher. The latter was a cut-down version of the former, with some minor re-wording in places to encompass vocabulary that might not be familiar to a non-librarian. The questionnaires were posted, rather than sending them by email, since the email addresses of most of the potential respondents were not readily available. Steps were taken to maximise the response rate, and hence to minimise bias in the responses to the questionnaire: it was piloted by a school librarian known to one of us; it was designedly short and distributed with a stamped SAE for ease of return; and it was sent out in time for the May half-term break to try to ensure that staff would not be completing it during the busy summer term. The questionnaire was semi-structured, with a mixture of tick-boxes for categories, 5-point Likert scales to measure attitudes, and spaces to provide as much or as little comment as a responder felt appropriate.

The next stage of the research was to conduct semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with questionnaire respondents who had expressed a willingness to be interviewed. Several areas for discussion had been identified from the mainly quantitative data provided by the questionnaire responses, and these were augmented by points that arose during the first few

interviews; these additional questions were posed if the opportunity arose during the remaining interviews. The interviews were recorded and transcribed for subsequent analysis.

4.   Results

In what follows, the terms "respondent" and "interviewee" will be used to refer to individuals who returned a completed questionnaire and who were interviewed, respectively. There were 45 librarian respondents and 38 head-teacher respondents, these corresponding to highly satisfactory response rates of 58% and 49%, respectively, from the 77 schools. That said, it should be noted that not all of the respondents responded to all of the questions, and thus some of the totals come to less than 45 or 38. There were 15 librarian interviewees; however, although six head-teachers expressed an initial willingness to be interviewed, it did not prove possible in the end to carry out any interviews with head-teachers. The remainder of this section is organised on the basis of the questions posed in the questionnaire, together with salient points that arose during the subsequent interviews, with a brief concluding section summarising the School Librarians' Network responses.

Are you: Chartered/Qualified/Library Assistant/Teacher Librarian/Volunteer/Other?
The results of this question are shown in the right-hand column of Table 1, where it will be seen that the majority of the respondents were either qualified or chartered (and this was also the case for the interviewees). However, all six categories were represented, showing that a wide variety of experiences and qualifications are acceptable for secondary school librarians in Cheshire. This is clearly at variance with CILIP's person specification for a school librarian, which states that librarians should be Chartered. There could be many reasons for this. For example, schools may not be aware of CILIP and therefore of what it advocates, or schools may have considered the matter and not considered it to be of importance. Also, if a librarian was working as a volunteer in a school library or was a professionally qualified teacher but with library responsibilities, then it is unlikely that they would be qualified. Whatever the reason, this was a cause of concern to some of the qualified and chartered interviewees who had worked towards such qualifications but who were aware of librarians in nearby schools who did not have the same qualifications and yet who had comparable or superior salaries.

Take in Table 1 near here

The responses were sub-divided into those who had HOD status and those who did not, as shown in the two central columns of Table 1. It will be seen that a greater fraction of the HODs are Chartered than are the non-HODs, i.e., that a greater fraction of the schools follow the CILIP guidelines when librarians are granted HOD status; even so, only 47% of the HODs are either Chartered or Qualified, while the corresponding figure for the non-HODs was only 26%. However, a χ^2 test shows that the differences in qualification between HODs and non-HODs are not statistically significant (χ^2=2.19, p=0.34, v=2).

Are you employed as Head of Department?

Only 15 of the 45 librarians had HOD status, conclusive evidence that CILIP's recommendations are not consistently adhered to in Cheshire's secondary schools. However, many of those who gave a negative response to this question emphasised the fact that they carried out HOD duties, such as attending HOD meetings or having control of their own budgets. An exception to this view was provided by a librarian who was also a qualified teacher and who felt that a librarian would have to take on more responsibilities than just those required for being a school librarian: "If you're a school librarian and you're fulfilling that role perhaps that is the top, because as I've said before I do think teaching is an incredibly hard job and I think Heads of Department have got more responsibilities than the Head of the library – I just think they have, it's the nature of their job so I think they deserve more money."

An interesting insight is obtained when the responses to this question are cross-linked with those to the question **Is your school: State maintained/Independent/Other?** Table 2 details the relationship between type of school and HOD status, and it will be seen that a librarian is much more likely to be an HOD if they do not work in the state-maintained sector. However, a χ^2 test shows that the differences in qualification between the HODs of different types of school are not statistically significant (χ^2=2.95, p=0.09, v=1).

Take in Table 2 near here

When asked in the interviews whether the sector of the school had any bearing on the employment status of the school librarian, the most frequent explanation was financial: independent schools were considered to have more money and, more importantly, more freedom to spend their money on what they deemed to be of top priority. Other reasons suggested for independent schools giving their librarians HOD status were: the academic focus of such schools, with "accountability" on the school's part to the parents who are

paying fees to send their children to the school and who expect that "it should have a nice big library"; and a general view in the state sector that librarians were part of the support staff and not directly contributing to the teaching life of the school.

Are you employed as a member of teaching/academic staff, or non-teaching/non academic/support staff?

Of the 44 librarians who responded to this question, no less than 40 were employed on the support staff scale, rather than on the academic scale. This might explain why so few librarians are employed as Heads of Department: being a HOD is associated with teaching, whereas the library is seen as a supporting resource for the whole school and therefore the librarian is seen as a member of the support staff. Their dissatisfaction with this aspect of their employment terms was mentioned by nearly all of the interviewees: it was disappointing to be considered in this way when they had either worked hard for academic qualifications in order to be able to call themselves a librarian, or had contributed to the teaching and learning outcomes of the school by teaching "library lessons".

This view was so widespread that the interviewees were asked whether the situation would improve if librarians received dual training, and came with teaching qualifications as well as library qualifications. It was felt that this idea might help more librarians to be considered as teaching staff, which was evidently an issue for many of the librarian interviewees, but the responses to this suggestion were very mixed. For example, one interviewee suggested that if somebody had a teaching qualification then they would immediately be given additional teaching duties at the expense of their library responsibilities; and another suggested that having two qualifications would lead to substantially enhanced salary expectations (with the possible implication that these would not be met). A few interviewees were prepared to consider obtaining a PGCE; whilst this was a minority view, there was greater support for the idea of including a teaching module within the library qualification.

Please indicate your strength of agreement (1-5) with the following responsibilities (a-h) that could be held by a school librarian.

Both the librarians and the head-teachers were asked to comment on the extent to which they felt it appropriate for school librarians to have particular responsibilities. Specifically, they were asked to give their level of agreement to a series of eight questions, each linked to an area of responsibility identified by CILIP as being appropriate for a librarian with HOD status (CILIP, 2008). The level of agreement was on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1, 3 and 5 denoted "strongly disagree", "neutral" and "strongly agree", respectively, and the responses

to these eight questions are summarised in Table 3. This table details the levels of agreement recorded for each of the eight questions, with each responsibility being associated with two columns: the first details the librarians' responses, and the second details the head-teachers' responses.

The first such responsibility was to "**Manage physical, traditional and electronic resources in order to contribute to the school's learning targets",** and the pattern of responses is shown in Figure 1. It will be seen that the responses are clustered at the two ends of the scale: at level 1, the head-teacher responses outnumber the librarian responses (despite the smaller number of head-teacher respondents); at level 5, the librarian responses outnumber the head-teacher responses; and at the intermediate levels (2-4) there is little difference in the responses. This pattern of behaviour was observed across the eight areas of responsibility, albeit with some variation in the precise numbers involved in each case as detailed in Table 3.

Take in Figure 1 and Table 3 near here

Whilst there is a fair measure of agreement between the librarians and the head-teachers regarding this key component of a school librarian's role, it is perhaps surprising that a number of the head-teachers disagreed strongly with the statement. This view mirrors the frustration expressed in many of the interviews at the general lack of understanding of their jobs, with comments such as "I think people think librarians just stamp books." A χ^2 test showed a statistically significant difference (i.e., $p<=0.05$) between the librarians' and the head-teachers' responses ($\chi^2=10.23$, $p=0.04$) (see the bottom row of Table 3). This was one of three areas of responsibility where significant differences in response were noted: the others were training pupils and staff ($\chi^2=14.15$, $p=0.01$), and analysing current trends ($\chi^2=9.87$, $p=0.04$), as discussed further below.

The second responsibility was to "**Create and implement a school library policy, which includes legal compliance with data protection, copyright and health and safety legislation supporting the school in meeting its targets"**. The creation of policy is one of those types of responsibilities that are most associated with a HOD, and it is clear from Table 3 that the librarians generally agreed that they should have that responsibility. One of the interviewees commented to the effect that "We can create a school library policy – that's no problem – we can sit down and have meetings and discuss it, but that's very different from

implementing it", suggesting that head-teachers and senor management may be prepared to listen to librarians' suggestions but may not recognise the need for subsequent action.

The third responsibility was to "**Plan the library budget, monitoring budget spend, so that resources are used to best effect**". This is probably the responsibility that is most closely associated with HOD status: even so, no less than 25% of the head-teachers strongly disagreed with the statement. When asked for their explanations as why there was such a difference in perspective between librarians and head-teachers on this topic, most of the interviewees could not see why librarians should not have control of the library budget. Comments included "I don't know who else the heads would actually want to look after the library budget", and "I don't think anyone else would be happy if I asked them to look after my budget" (the latter from a librarian who did have control). One interviewee suggested that the reason for this observation was "possibly historical, depending on the institution...and I think the way that some responsibilities have been allocated vary from institution to institution."

The next responsibility was to "**Advise key colleagues within the school and establish a high profile within the wider learning community to ensure appropriate access to learning resources**."   Here again, 25% of the head-teachers expressed strong disagreement (this is the same 25% mentioned in the previous question). However, it should be noted that CILIP's definition of "key colleagues" is unclear and a head-teacher's definition of "key colleagues" could be very different to that of a librarian's (and there could even be a difference between two librarians), depending on the school's staffing and organisational culture. The respondents were then asked about the need to "**Train pupils and staff to use information resources in order to promote learning and extend patterns of teaching**". The distribution of responses here is very similar to that for the previous responsibility (see Table 3), although some of the interviewees noted that the head-teachers might have associated "information resources" with members of their ICT staff, rather than their library staff.

The next responsibility was to "**Plan and deliver the library's contribution to information literacy programmes within the school encouraging reader development**".   The distribution is not very different from those for the other questions, but the interviewees repeatedly asked what CILIP meant by this, since it seems strange to include "information literacy programmes" in the context of "encouraging reader development". If the school librarians were confused by the question then it is almost certain that the head-teachers

would have been (even though their questionnaire included an explanation of the term), and they may well have assumed that the question related to literacy in general: indeed, one interviewee commented that the senior management "wouldn't want them [the librarian] to have the full control...literacy within the school." It is perhaps worth noting that the term "information literacy" has only really emerged during the last decade, and it may hence have been simply unfamiliar to the more experienced staff.

The penultimate responsibility related to the need to "**Analyse current education initiatives and trends in library and information services so that the service is based on the best and most up to date information and methods"** and there was nothing particularly noteworthy about the responses. This was not, however, the case with the final responsibility, to "**Manage, train and develop other members of the team, so that all staff have the skills for current and planned activities, in order to inform decision making processes within the school**", where there was again confusion as to CILIP's intent when speaking of "all staff". Given that it is CILIP speaking, one might assume that this relates to all of the staff of the library; however, the last clause of the sentence ("in order to inform decision making processes within the school") led some of the interviewees to assume that this related to all staff in the school. Decisions made within the school could range from stationery to timetabling to financial decisions with important consequences, and it is hence not unreasonable for the head-teachers to have extensively queried the involvement of librarians in such processes.

Taking the eight sets of responsibilities as whole, the librarians' responses are very firmly at the upper end of agreement, with the median level of agreement across all the questions being 5 ("strongly agree"). The head-teachers' responses are less concentrated: level-5 is the most common response for all of the questions but level-1 was always the second most common, with a median level of agreement of 3 ("neutral"). The head of a school is likely to be the person with the most influence over the way that the librarian is employed and that the library is viewed, and it is hence hardly surprising that librarians are employed in a multitude of ways and with varying levels of responsibility. Indeed, one of the respondents wrote "I have found that it very much depends on the current Head's opinion of how important the library is within the school and therefore the importance of the librarian", a view that was confirmed (to a greater or lesser extent) by all of the interviewees. Inspection of Table 3 will also show a fair (and in some cases high) degree of consistency in the responses to the eight types of responsibility; for example, there are always 7-11 (mostly 9) Level-1, HOD responses, and these were always the same set of (predominantly state-school) HODs.

Do you feel these responsibilities (a-h above) are an accurate reflection of your role as the school librarian in your school?

Of the 43 librarians who responded to this question, 32 (i.e., 74%) agreed that the responsibilities were a fair reflection of their current role. Since these responsibilities are those identified by CILIP as being associated with HOD status, this would suggest that the majority of our sample of librarians should be employed as HODs. However, it has already been noted that only one-third of the sample of librarians have this status; and the conclusion must hence be either that many librarians are doing an HOD's job but are not being paid for it, or that the CILIP job description is not a realistic one. It is believed that the former reason is more important, because all of the 11 interviewees who felt able to comment on this question stated that the listed responsibilities did indeed equate to HOD status. That said, five felt that the CILIP responsiblities omitted important components of the role, the most frequently mentioned being promoting reading for pleasure and behaviour management skills.

According to Ofsted, "In the best schools, librarians were given the status and responsibility appropriate to their important middle management roles. In these schools, it was common for them to be part of the middle management structure, to attend working parties (such as on teaching and learning or the curriculum) and to attend staff training events." (Ofsted 2006). CILIP (Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals) also agree that the school librarian should have "head of department status". (CILIP 2008). Were you aware of these statements? Is this the case in your school? Do you agree with these statements?

The respondents were then asked whether they were aware of the Ofsted and CILIP statements (in the case of the librarians) or of just the Ofsted statements (in the case of the head-teachers, as they were unlikely to be familiar with CILIP and its policies). 15 of the head-teachers were aware, and 21 were not aware, of the Ofsted statement; the latter figure is quite low, especially as 17 of the head-teachers answered yes in response to the follow-up question as to whether this was the case in their school, with 16 saying that it was not, i.e., over one-half of the respondents believed that the Ofsted statement applied to their school. In the case of the librarians, 21 were aware of both statements, 6 of Ofsted only, 10 of CILIP only, and 5 were unaware of either statement. 14 stated that the CILIP statement applied to their school, whereas no less than 28 stated that it did not.

The very different views expressed by the respondents suggests that there could be a difference of opinion in some schools between the head-teacher and the librarian: in fact, in the sample, there were only two schools where both the head-teacher and the librarian

responded to this question. For both of these schools, the librarians agreed with the statements but also indicated that the statements did not represent the situation in their schools, whereas their head teachers also agreed but said that the Ofsted statement did represent the situation in their school. The interviewees were hence asked why there might be a difference of opinion within the same institution. Ten stated that this was because head-teachers did not know what the librarian did, with two additionally suggesting that this was because the head-teachers wished to portray a school in good working order. However, some of the interviewees suggested alternative reasons, such as one who stated "the head-teacher won't think about the salary the librarian will be getting, they'll just think well the librarian is the head of the library, so that's a Head of Department." This, and several other interview responses, suggests an underlying problem of perception of the librarian's role, which in turn means that it is the responsibility of the librarian to advertise the library services and to be more involved, so that they can be perceived as having an important role.

Finally in this set of questions, the respondents were asked whether they agreed with the statements. 28 of the head-teachers agreed with the Ofsted statement, while just 7 did not; 39 of the librarians agreed with both the CILIP and Ofsted statements, while just 3 agreed only with the Ofsted statement. A comparison of the head-teachers' responses with some of the previous data, leads to two interesting conclusions. First, more head-teachers agreed with the Ofsted statement than were aware of it, i.e., it made sense to them even if they had previously been unaware of its existence. Second, more head-teachers agreed with the Ofsted statement than agreed that it was the case in their own school, i.e., it made sense to them even if that was not the current situation in their school.

CILIP recommendations as statutory requirements.

In addition to the interview comments that have already been included, many of the interviewees agreed with the suggestion by Crosthwaite (2004) that CILIP's recommendations, should be made into statutory requirements. All agreed that it would help to clarify the situation, and allow for easier career progression through means similar to teachers' pay scales, where, as more responsibility was acquired, so their pay and status would increase, until they became an HOD. Following on from this, the interviewees were asked how such a change could be brought about, a question that occasioned significant criticism of CILIP. It was accused of being "London-centric", and not focused enough on school librarians, with the views being adequately summarized by one interviewee who stated "Basically, they've never really supported - they've never had enough clout – they've never shown enough teeth in the area of salaries and they always said salaries were nothing

to do with them that was down to the unions….they've never been determined enough to make things happen and I think that is why they don't have the statutory school requirements – that could have happened thirty years ago." Criticisms of CILIP are also evident in the survey of school librarians by Ritchie (2010).

School Librarian Network responses

A limitation of the results presented above is that they are based on responses from just a single geographic location, viz Cheshire, with the possibility that the results have been affected by some local factors that do not apply more generally. Accordingly, an email questionnaire was distributed via the School Librarians' Network (SLN), which is an email network that provides a source of guidance and support for school librarians employed in the United Kingdom and across the world. The administrator of the SLN kindly distributed an appeal seeking school librarians who would be willing to complete the questionnaire by email and who worked in any other UK county other than Cheshire (so as to identify any potential bias in the data collected thus far).

Completed questionnaires were received from 14 SLN members covering different types and sizes of schools and, importantly, a wide geographic spread (Birmingham, Dorset, Hertfordshire, Kent, London, North Tyneside, Nottinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Wiltshire and Yorkshire). The proportion of the respondents who were Chartered (7/14) or had HOD status (9/14) were notably higher than in the Cheshire sample; however, the responses to the CILIP responsibilities broadly mirror those noted above, with the median level of agreement across all the questions again being 5, i.e., "strongly agree". In fact, the level of agreement is arguably higher since only one of the 14 SLN respondents dissented from the view that the CILIP responsibilities were an accurate reflection of their job (as against 11 out of 43 previously). That said, additional responsibilities were again much in evidence (8/14), these including sole supervision of 100+ students and overall responsibility for a school's virtual learning environment.

5.   Conclusions

In this paper, we report the results of a survey of librarians and head teachers in secondary schools in Derbyshire, and of follow-up interviews of some of the librarians. The responses make clear that most librarians are employed as support staff although many of them had responsibilities that would appear to be compatible with HOD status. It is not easy to define exactly what HOD status entails for a school-librarian: some have the official title but not the middle management status, whilst some have neither, or have the status but not the official

title. This situation is reflected in a wide range of employment terms and conditions and a wide range of levels of job satisfaction. The studies of responsibilities identified in the CILIP job statement suggests that if the statement is indeed correct then far more librarians are doing the work of an HOD than are being recognised for it through pay and official status. However, this situation may have arisen from the fact that these duties – whilst clearly very important and responsible to the individual librarian – do not merit HOD status in the eyes of the head-teachers. It is most unfortunate that it was not possible to interview any of the head-teachers to further investigate this point, despite the considerable efforts that were made to arrange such interviews.

It is worth comparing our findings with a very recent study by Ritchie (2010) that reports a survey of school librarians' self-perception of their status within their schools. The survey used the mailing list of the School Librarians' Network mentioned at the end of Section 4, with just over three-quarters of her 226 respondents working in secondary schools. 48% of the respondents identified their status as being equivalent to that of HOD, a rather larger figure than the 33% that actually had that status within the Cheshire schools studied here; however, the two surveys are in agreement in finding librarians who felt that they had HOD status but were not paid at that grade. Ritchie discusses in detail the factors, both positive and negative, that contribute to school librarians' self-perceived status and identified lack of support from senior management as the most important such factor. She also suggests that the relationship between school librarians and senior management would be a fertile area for future research. The present study here goes some way towards meeting this suggestion, since it shows clearly that the views of the most important part of schools' senior management structures, i.e., the head-teachers, often differ markedly from those of their librarians.

In conclusion, we note that the job description which provided the focus for this study was released by CILIP in July 2008. It was updated again in July 2009, by which time the study was well under way; however, the changes that have been made would not seem to affect the issues raised here since all of the responsibilities mentioned in the 2008 version are included in the 2009 version (albeit under different guises and using slightly altered terminology). The job description as a whole is much more detailed. It is, however, also broader in scope and includes several new areas, some of which might not be applicable to all schools, e.g., establishing working relations with the Connexions service. One important responsibility that seems to have been downplayed is the area of budget management skills. These are included on the second page of the description as a required skill, but they are not included

in the list of main functions. Most teaching HODs are expected to have budget responsibilities, and this change is hence unlikely to aid a librarian's claim for HOD status.

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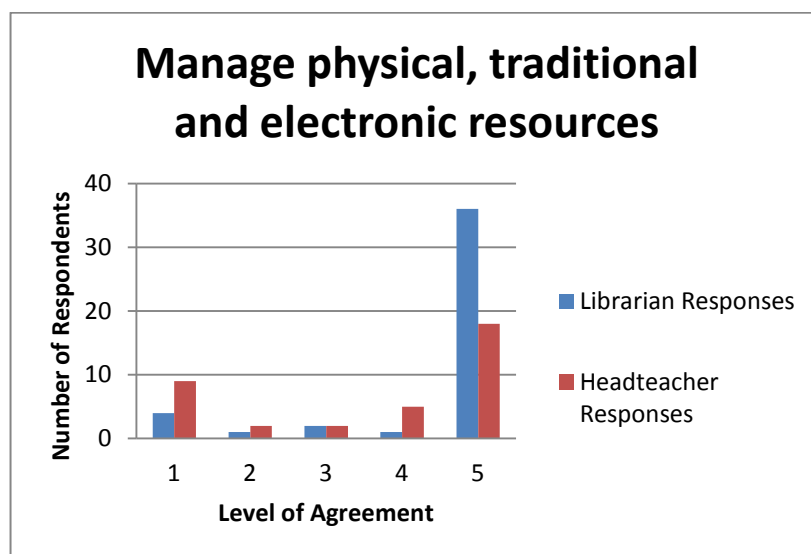
Figure 1. Responsibility of school librarians for the management of resources to support a
school's learning targets

Qualification	HOD	Non-HOD	Total
Chartered	7	7	14
Qualified	3	10	13
Library assistant	1	4	5
Teacher librarian	1	0	2
Volunteer	0	1	1
Other	3	5	8

Table 1. Qualifications of respondents

Type of school	HOD	Non-HOD
State-maintained	9	25
Independent	6	5

Table 2. Relationship between type of school and HOD status

Level of agreement	Manage resources		Create library policy		Plan budget		Advise key colleagues		Train pupils and staff		Plan information literacy		Analyse current trends		Manage other team members	
1	4	9	3	9	3	9	2	9	1	11	3	8	2	9	4	7
2	1	2	3	2	1	1	2	2	3	2	1	4	4	0	3	4
3	2	2	4	3	1	3	4	3	2	0	4	5	3	3	3	0
4	1	5	8	7	1	2	5	5	8	3	8	6	12	10	11	7
5	36	18	25	15	37	21	30	17	30	20	27	13	22	14	19	14
χ^2 and p	10.23	0.04	5.33	0.25	8.19	0.08	7.63	0.11	14.15	0.01	8.82	0.07	9.87	0.04	4.78	0.31

Table 3. Levels of agreement with statements regarding the responsibilities of school librarians. Each responsibility is associated with two columns: the first details the librarians' responses, and the second details the head-teachers' responses

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