

Change Management in Libraries: The Case of the University of Ghana Library System (UGLS)

Perpetua S Dadzie & Monica Mensah

Abstract

In 2018, the University of Ghana Library System (UGLS) experienced an unprecedented rotation of staff within its main library and satellite libraries. The changes were long overdue as the regular rotation of staff by the Human Resource and Organisational Development Directorate (HRODD) somehow, never affected library personnel. Fifty (50) Junior and senior library staff who had been in one position for more than a decade were rotated within the UGLS. This paper reflects on how the change was achieved, the pre- and post- interviews of staff involved, and lessons learned one year later. Findings emphasize the value of communication, the structured process and transparency to make the change easier and implementation smoother. The paper concludes that regular rotation of staff and the management of such change are significant for the development of the UGLS and for the university as a whole. Recommendations for libraries in Ghana and in Africa embarking on similar staff rotation are captured in the paper.

Introduction

The role of change management is inevitable for the survival and development of any organization (Ik & Azeez 2020). Change has become part of everyone's life, as well as corporate existence. Indeed, change cannot be avoided when it occurs and is therefore unstoppable (Wang, Olivier & Chen 2020). The inevitability of change has compelled organizations to consider it as a crucial part of their existence. An organizational change could, however, seem devastating at the initial stage, particularly when it involves several employees with strongly held sentiments and beliefs about maintaining traditional library services (Soehner 2014). Change has never been easy as it has created anxieties and fear among recipients (Sidikova 2011). The latter feel they have been pushed out of their comfort zone and must adapt to new work skills which they envision could be difficult. Recipients of change can be overwhelmed with the new status quo as they now have to strategize physically and emotionally in the new position. Transfers to new or unknown departments may be daunting for some staff, as it may result in the break-up of well-established friendships and workgroups (Adeyoyin et al, 2015).

Though organizations may be sensitive to the resistance to change, they are also conscious of global environmental changes which require higher performance from staff. Organizations may therefore implement changes when there is new leadership, when technological innovations are required, or when there is a need to give other staff opportunities and experiences that they may have missed along the line. Undeniably, change can generate both positive and negative impacts on organizational outcomes, which is why the need to manage change in organizations has become an urgent matter of concern. Nevertheless, given the voluminous literature on organizational change and change management, limited published research work has explicitly conceptualized readiness for change in libraries from a perspective that investigates the interaction of the library staff readiness for change relative to the movement from one duty post to another. Indeed, existing research on change management in libraries has largely focused on changes in library technologies, collections, and services (e.g., Atkinson 2021; Boff & Cardwell 2020; Adebayo, Fagbohun, Esse & Nwokeoma 2019).

This paper seeks to fill the gap identified in the literature and provide insights into the dynamic interaction and staff readiness for the change process in the library setting. The main thrust of this paper is to assess changes that occurred within the University of Ghana Library System as informed mostly by the opportunity to give other staff experiences which they hitherto never enjoyed. More specifically, the paper provides a reflection on how the change was achieved, the feelings and experiences of staff pre-and-post change periods, and lessons learned a year after.

UGLS Libraries

The University of Ghana Library System (UGLS) comprises all libraries within the colleges, institutes, and centres of the University of Ghana. These comprise the main library, satellites, institutes, centres, departments, residence halls, and the Accra City Campus libraries. The Balme Library is the main library of the University of Ghana and the largest within the UGLS. The UGLS is hybrid and subscribes to an increasing number of online databases, including electronic journals and electronic books which are accessible 24/7 via the library's website balme@ug.edu.gh. The primary clientele of the UGLS includes faculty, students, researchers, administrators, alumni of the University of Ghana, and students from other universities. UGLS has an annual budget of ten million Ghana Cedis, {i.e., One million six hundred and thirty-two thousand four hundred and sixty-six United States dollars (\$1,632,466.00)}. The UGLS employs approximately one hundred and eighty-five (185) full-time staff designated mainly as senior members, senior staff, and junior staff. These library staff work in various units such as cataloging

and classification, acquisitions, reference and user services, and electronic resources departments of the UGLS.

Generally, there are two categories of employees within the University of Ghana, namely “Senior Members” and “Staff”. “Senior Members” (SM) of the University are academic (teaching/research), professional, and administrative personnel who by appointment become members of convocation. “Senior Staff” (SS) are members of staff not below the rank of Administrative Assistant or equivalent. “Junior Staff” (JS) are members of staff below the rank of Administrative Assistant or equivalent. Like other employees of the University, the designation of a library staff within the UGLS is currently predominantly dependent on staff qualifications. Senior members include library staff with a Master of Philosophy degree or Doctor of Philosophy degree in the field of information science and could be academic or professional librarians. The senior staff comprises library staff with a Bachelor of Arts degree in information science, whilst Junior staff have at least a Diploma in information science.

Rotation of staff in the University of Ghana is a tradition performed by the Human Resource and Organisational Development Directorate “HRODD” of the university every six years, and among all staff categories. Given that staff rotations are regular among employees of the University, it is unusual that this exercise somehow never affected library personnel. Consequently, library staff, especially in the senior and junior staff categories who had been in one position and or department for more than a decade were not affected by any form of rotation within the UGLS. However, in 2018, the University of Ghana Library System (UGLS) experienced an unprecedented rotation of staff within its main library and satellite libraries. Staff who were affected primarily consisted of library staff who had stayed in one position and or office for more than 10 years, even though a few others who had spent six years or more were also included. The rotation schedule of library staff did not however consider the transfer of staff to another unit of the library where the library staff is expected to perform the same functions as he or she did in his or her previous unit. In other words, library staff in the cataloging and classification department of the main library (Balme Library) may not necessarily be transferred to a cataloging department in a satellite library but to a reference or electronic resources department in the library they are transferred to.

Literature Review

Resistance to change may not originate from all staff, but may be attributed to individual levels of reactions, perceptions, and assumptions of individuals within an organization (Atkinson 2021). Nevertheless, given that change may be met with strong resistance from employees, which

may end in the fear to initiate such processes in organizations, Lauer (2021) cautioned it is important to overcome these obstacles and to dare to change since standstill normally leads to organizational failure. One way to achieve a productive change initiative, Adebayo (2018) declared, is to have change management systems in place. Change management is a perspective that highlights the dynamics of transition and organizational transformation (Ali & Anwar 2021). Change management has been described as the process of continually renewing an organization's direction, structure, and capabilities to serve the ever-changing needs of external and internal customers (Moran and Brightman 2001). It is concerned with the internal administration and implementation of structural change or restructuring (Ali & Anwar 2021). According to Griffith-Cooper and King (2010), as cited in Dukic et al (2017; p54), change management is also defined as "a set of principles, techniques, and prescriptions applied to the human aspects of executing major change initiatives in organizational settings". The management of change in organizations is a complex process, comprising a lot of efforts from management and employees, and requires considerable foresight. Consequently, change management is not only about the organization itself, but the people, since change does not occur on its own but requires the willingness and corporation of management and employees to be successful.

Khan and Kamal (2015) argue that library leadership should take the responsibility of guiding the planned action, bring clarity of purpose and direction for the change, and encourage initiative, creativity, and self-discipline in the library. A library leader should possess an art of motivating the staff and should be a good planner, organizer, controller, and evaluator. According to Lientz and Rea (2004), cited in Dukic et al. (2017), some benefits of successful change management are a simplification of work, increased efficiency and improved management of the work, increased automation, increased revenue, simpler organization, improved customer/supplier relations, and improved employee morale. Kamila (2013) emphasized that the only solution available to information professionals to overcome all difficulties arising from the ever-changing environment in the digital era is change management.

Nevertheless, it is essential to note that, despite the proliferation of literature on change management in organizations, the literature on change management in libraries focuses on technological developments and innovations, and not on changes in library staffing. In particular, the literature on change management regarding staff rotation or transfer has received very little attention in the literature of library administration in Ghana. Atkinson (2021) however advised that in discussing change management in academic libraries, it is important not to let the technology dictate, but be viewed as the enabling agent, not the driver. Atkinson (2021) asserted that the skills, attitudes, and behaviors of library staff are key issues when considering technology

developments and change management in academic libraries. Consequently, given that a handful of documented efforts in the literature of library and information science are directly relevant to the topic being investigated, it is situated within the literature on job rotation or reorganization of staff in the library as a form of change. As such, for this study, the review considers the literature on change management relative to job rotation and job transfer among employees in libraries. For this study job transfer and job rotation are used interchangeably and refer to the movement of library staff from one unit, department, or post to another that requires the same operational ability, and at the same level of the organization, without necessarily moving up the organizational hierarchy.

Over the years, evidence of the benefits of staff rotation has been shared by several researchers (Adomi 2006; Earney & Martins 2009; Jalagat 2016; Van Wyk, Swarts, & Mukonza 2018) who have emphasized that moving staff from one unit to another results in wide-ranging positive outcomes, serves as a training process for both professional and non-professional staff, removes monotony, boredom, and fatigue along with the notion that a particular member of staff is the most suitable person for a particular job, whilst promoting cooperation, teamwork, job experience, and skills development in organizations. In particular, Earney and Martins (2009) state that library managers or administrators can use job rotation programs to develop their staff with the potential to meet future departmental goals, and suggest that the gains from adopting a job rotation policy are larger when there is more prior uncertainty.

In Nairobi, Japheth & Peter (2018) assessed the perceptions, opinions, and thoughts of 57 library staff at the University of Nairobi and Kenyatta University libraries in Kenya towards job rotation and reported that more than fifty percent of the library staff agreed on the relevance of the job rotation program. The paper listed the acquisition of new skills and a good working environment among others as some of the motivators of job rotation in the libraries. Recommendations from the study were geared towards adequate staff job design and employees' participation in the job rotation decision-making process. In Nigeria, findings from a survey of the professional librarians from seven university libraries reported job rotation as an opportunity for library staff to learn new skills, become acquainted with other operations and services of the library, overcome boredom, and improve job satisfaction. The study also submitted that even though the movement of staff was unplanned, the transferred library staff quickly adjusted to their new posts by studying handover notes and files in their new departments. The authors, therefore, advised university libraries to develop a coherent and non-punitive job rotation policy for their institutions, to ensure that employees are not kept in a particular unit for too long, nor should some staff be rotated more than others (Adomi 2006). Still in Nigeria, findings from a library staff opinion

regarding job rotation at the University of Ilorin Library revealed a positive reaction to the possible introduction of a job rotation exercise. The author recommended the development of a job rotation policy as an effective approach to achieving organizational job rotation intentions (Olorunsola 2000). Equally, Baro's (2012), examination of the job rotation program of the Niger Delta University Library, to evaluate the impact of the program on newly employed librarians and their job performance, revealed a high level of satisfaction with the program from the library staff and showed that the program allowed library staff to acquire new skills, enhance staff productivity, develop new relationships across the university library, and gain skills needed for future career advancement.

Methodology

The study adopted a qualitative research technique due to its flexibility and ability to allow for an in-depth interrogation of library staff experiences. Interviews and staff durbars¹ were held with various categories of staff before the changes in the workplaces. The staff durbars held were to inform staff about the impending changes and to allay their fears that the changes were not meant to intimidate any of them. During the staff durbars, Library staff were taken through what change management is, the reasons why change is good for an individual and an organization, and why people, in general, would resist any form of change from Administration.

Head librarians in all sectors of UGLS were tasked with preparing comprehensive orientation programs for all new staff to enable them to integrate easily into their new work environment. The staff durbars were followed by pre-exit and post-exit interviews. The authors and four other library staff carried out the fieldwork. The team targeted all 50 library staff who were affected by the transfer within UGLS. The departments of all potential interviewees were determined from the transfer list obtained from the HRODD and respondents were purposively selected based on the list. For the pre-exit interviews, staff responded to questions relative to things they were happy and unhappy about, challenges faced and recommendations to improve the present departments they were about to leave, as well as general improvement of services to patrons.

One year after the pre-exit interviews, junior and senior staff who were transferred from their units to other departments within the UGLS were again contacted to examine the impact of the change. In the post-exit interview, library staff were asked if they had learned new lessons in

¹ An open platform to address the impending staff changes within the University of Ghana Library System

the current unit, things that they were happy or unhappy within the current unit, whether the transfer had been beneficial in any way, how long they thought staff should be kept at one position before a transfer and finally, recommendations concerning the transfer of staff.

The data collection for both pre- and post- interviews involved face-to-face in-depth interviews using an interview guide developed after a careful review of available literature. The interviews were held in the respondent's department pre- and post-transfer. On average, each interview lasted for 25 minutes, in most cases reaching a point of saturation in the types of responses. All the interviews were audio-recorded with the consent of the interviewees. The audiotapes after the interviews were transcribed verbatim and analyzed manually using hand-coding. The responses were carefully grouped into similar themes for analysis.

Results

Respondents' characteristics

For the sake of confidentiality, anonymity, and ethical considerations, the respondents are represented by a self-generated pseudonym. The respondents comprised 9 females (35%) and 17 males (65%) who were mainly junior (42%) and senior (58%) staff. Table 1 presents the sampled population.

Table 1: Respondents Characteristics (n=26)

<i>Pseudonyms</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Years in Department before transfer</i>
Adowa	Female	JS	21
Phil	Male	SS	32
Kwame	Male	SS	16
Mia	Female	SS	11
Love	Female	JS	31
Ike	Male	JS	20
Kofi	Male	SS	13
Bryan	Male	SS	19
Jane	Female	JS	11
Evans	Male	SS	15
John	Male	JS	14
Ben	Male	SS	21
Liza	Female	JS	15
Seth	Male	SS	16
Kojo	Male	JS	12
Ella	Female	SS	21
Akos	Female	SS	20
Jack	Male	SS	16
Kwaku	Male	JS	18
James	Male	SS	19

Ivy	Female	JS	22
Kwesi	Male	SS	21
Leo	Male	JS	17
Fred	Male	SS	12
Gina	Female	SS	14
Duke	Male	JS	18

Note: JS-Junior staff; SS-Senior staff

Response rate

Overall, the authors initially scheduled 50 interviews but recorded a refusal rate of 48% giving a response rate of 52%. This was expected as a number of the potential respondents were aggrieved and felt punished because of the change in their workstations and assigned work.

Response Coding

Thematic areas were carefully identified from the number of participants who articulated a particular theme. Table 2 and 3 provides a list of the prominent themes derived from both the pre-exit and post-exit interviews respectively.

Thematic areas were carefully identified from the number of participants who articulated a particular theme. Table 2 and 3 provides a list of the prominent themes derived from both the pre-exit and post-exit interviews respectively.

Table 2: Themes Pre-Exit Interviews N=26

Transfer Views	Theme Freq ²	%
Transfer Non-Resistance-Positive Reactions; 6 (23.1%)		
Motivators		
• System shut down	3	11.5
• Poor Infrastructure/equipment	4	15.4
• Lack of management support	6	23.1
• Lack of dedicated budget	5	19.2
• Boredom	3	11.5
Transfer Resistance-Negative Reactions; 20 (77%)		
De-motivators		
• Sudden change	19	73.1
• Lack of prior communication	17	65.4
• Inconsistency	14	53.4
• Unfairness	5	19.2
Transfer Duration-Options; 26 (100%)		
University duration		
• Too short	1	3.8
• Too long	4	15.4
• Inconsistent	21	80.8
<i>Source; Field Data. %=frequency percentage</i>		

² Total number of participants discussing the construct on themes under pre-exit interviews

Table 3: Themes Post-Exit Interviews N=26

Transfer Views	Theme Freq ³	%
Transfer Non-Resistance; 21 (80.8%)		
Motivators		
• New Knowledge	21	80.8
• New library experience	20	76.9
• Exposure to unknown library practices	19	73.1
• Overcome boredom	14	53.8
• Teamwork	10	38.5
• IT infrastructure and resources	19	73.1
Transfer Resistance; 5 (19%)		
De-motivators		
• Poor Infrastructure/equipment	4	15.4
• Gossips	2	7.7
• Lack of teamwork	3	11.5
• Poor work conditions	4	15.4
• Poor sanitation	4	15.4
Existing Transfer Duration; 6 (100%)		
University Duration		
• Too short	0	0.0
• Too long	3	11.5
• Appropriate	23	88.5
Recommendations; 26 (100%)		
• Prior transfer information	26	100.0
• Retention of skilled/experienced staff	5	19.2
• Absence of Handover notes	6	23.1
• HOD's Unwillingness to train	3	11.5

Source; *Field Data.*

%=frequency percentage

³ Total number of participants discussing the construct on themes under pre-exit interviews

Analysis of Pre-Exit Interviews

Pre-exit interviews were conducted to assess the views of the transferees on the transfers and to probe their level of acceptance and/or resistance to the transfers and their take on how long a person should spend in a department before transfer.

Transfer Non-Resistance-Positive Reactions

Quite a number of the respondents expressed some level of excitement in their transfer to other departments as captured in the following:

I am happy about this transfer because I want to know what goes on elsewhere in other libraries within the UGLS. I have been here at my present department for a long and there is no motivation to work here anymore. Most of the equipment here to work with is not functioning and management here are not also supportive of *'Seth' {16yrs at current department}*.

I have always prayed about this transfer and God has finally answered my prayers. Initially, when I came here I was happy but not anymore. Because staff welfare especially library staff are not part of management concerns here and there is a lack of due respect for us as library staff. For instance, we don't have cleaners cleaning the library and hence we as staff have to clean the place ourselves. Library staff are not involved in any decisions concerning the library, and we lack the required logistics to work among several others. *'Kojo' {12yrs at current department}*

I like the transfer and more especially where I am being transferred to because I have always wanted to work there as I believe I will learn more new library practices and become a better librarian. *'akos' {20yrs at current department}*

Well, the transfer was sudden, but I prefer leaving my current department, because as you can see nothing works here, and I have been here for over 30 good years. We have limited reference materials making it difficult to serve patrons, the library is not automated and hence everything is done manually, the malfunctioning of PCs and printers coupled with very slow internet and WIFI connectivity. And these things sometimes frustrates our patrons and we as library staff *'Love' {31yrs at current department}*

Am happy about the transfer because working here is too boring, and repetitive. The department has a small library and I have to do the same thing each day. At least where I am going is a big library so I believe I will have variety. *'Gina' {14yrs at current department}*

Transfer Resistance-Negative Reactions

From the interviews, it was obvious that most of the respondents if given the opportunity would have resisted the transfer. In particular, approximately seventy-seven percent (77%) of the respondents expressed frustration about the transfer as reflected in the following sentiments:

I know that the university employed us and has the right to transfer us whenever they want to, but at least they could have given us prior notice or some form of information about it, so we can prepare for it this to me is too sudden *'Ivy' {22yrs at current department}*

I am not happy about this transfer at all. And I hope management will come together to reverse it. I am comfortable where I am and am doing my work well. I don't even understand why I am been moved from here and the letter doesn't explain it. It only indicates that it's a university policy. So if it is a policy why hasn't it been implemented since I started work here. I feel this is deliberate to just disorganize some of us *'Kwame' {16rs at current department}*.

The transfer to me is unfair, because where I stay is closer to my office, and where I am being transferred to is very far from my home. I have to now wake up as early as 4 am just to make sure am not late to work because of the traffic. *'Leo' {17yrs at current department}*

Honestly, I don't know what I am doing wrong here to be replaced by another person. I have been here for so many years and I have been moved around the Balme library to various sections, what transfer do I need again. But what can I say than to obey. *'Phil' {32yrs at current department}*

I don't contest the transfer, but my only problem is that if it has to do then it should be consistent. Because some of us have been here for a very long time hence this comes as a surprise and a shock. *'Duke' {30yrs at current department}*

Hmmm, what do I have to say than to go where am asked to go to. But to be frank with you, I think this transfer is sincerely not fair at all, and if I had the power I would have resisted it because it was too sudden. *'Jack' {16yrs at current department}*

We are not been treated fairly at all. I have been in this my current unit for almost twenty (20) years. So if the university wants to initiate a transfer program, they should have at least communicated it to me for at least a month so that some of us can prepare ourselves for it. But the way it was done, it looks like it's a form of punishment, why? *'Ike' {20yrs at current department}*.

Madam, do you know I stay at the university accommodation facility that is the staff village? And one of the reasons why I have not left this job in totality is because of the nearness of where I stay to my current department. But now my letter of transfer indicates that am supposed to move to the city campus library which is very far from where I stay. Now I have to wake up and leave the house before 6 am to avoid traffic, and I am the same person to take my kids to school at the University of Ghana Primary School which is on the main campus, and pick them as well. So madam, please tell me, if this is not punishment then what is it called? *'Ben' {21yrs at current department}*

This transfer is just unfair; at least we should have been given some prior notification. I mean how can I just receive a letter that I am been transferred without any communication. I don't have an option but if I did, I would have resisted this transfer strongly *'Evans' {15yrs at current department}*.

Transfer Duration

While the respondents had diverse opinions on the transfers, all of them (100%) however agreed and exhibited the need for the duration for transferring staff from one unit to the other as presented in figure 1 below. The results in figure 1 suggest that the respondents prefer library staff to stay in a unit for a minimum of five years and a maximum of ten years before being transferred from a current department to another.

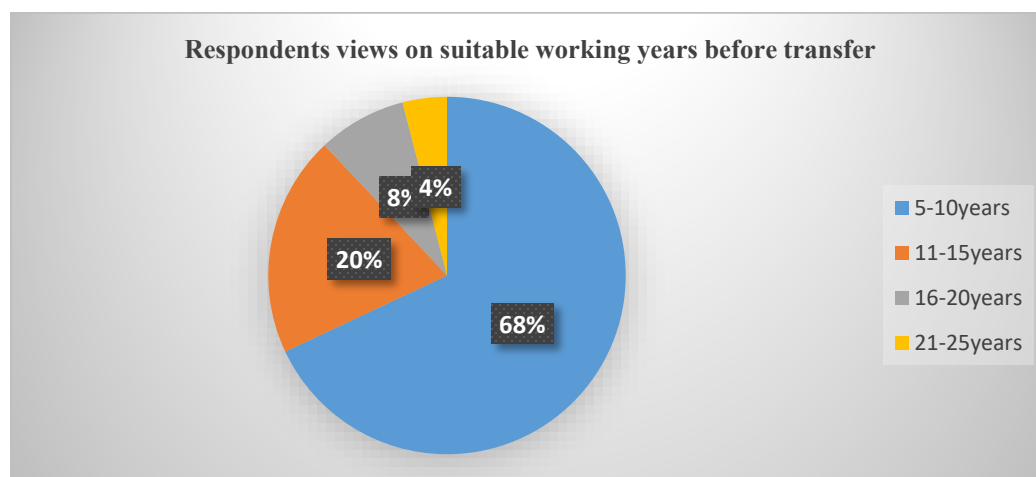


Figure 1: Respondents views on transfer duration: Pre-Transfer

Analysis of Post-Exit Interviews

A year later, library staff who were transferred to other units, and who were part of the pre-exit interviews were again interviewed to find out their sentiments on the transfer one year on. This interview was to mainly find out if there are any changes in transferee's opinions on the transfer one year on, whether the transfer was beneficial or not, skills acquired since the pre-exit interviews, and whether they had any recommendations on how transfers should be carried out within the UGLS.

Transfer Non-Resistance: Benefits

From the interviews, the responses from the post-exit conversations were suggestive that a number of the respondents seem to agree and appreciate the transfers since quite a number of the library staff indicated that they had learned new things which they hitherto never had any idea about. These ranged from simple things such as using the Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) to searching for information for clientele and the use of information technology (IT)

infrastructure and resources of the UGLS. Indeed, it is quite interesting to note that a number of the respondents who indicated their unhappiness about the transfer during the pre-exit interviews now declared their support for the transfer. One such respondent remarked:

Initially, I was not happy at all when I received my transfer letter, but I must confess that I am happy being here because I have learned a lot of things I never knew about as a library staff for all these years. I now know how to use the OPAC to look for information for clientele, cataloging, biometric registration of students, and registering them for off-campus access. *'Jack' {16yrs at previous department, 1 year at current department}*

Such sentiments were also affirmed by other respondents who initially opposed the transfer:

The transfer to me is the best decision the university has taken. Last year when I was transferred I felt I was being punished for what God knows I don't know about. But today I can tell you that it was a good move. I have learned a lot in my new department. I have for instance learned the circulation process which I wasn't knowledgeable in at my former unit. I am more familiar with the sierra software and gained knowledge about the numerous e-resources for academic research. *'Ike' {20yrs at previous department, 1 year at current department}*.

I do appreciate the transfer now and am happy I was transferred to this unit. Here, there is teamwork, unity, and camaraderie among colleagues and the Head of the unit. Support and motivation given by the head are very much encouraging, and the unit is very challenging. *'Evans' {15yrs at previous department, 1 year at current department}*.

Others also proclaimed:

I have learned several new things in my current unit. One of such is the circulation process which I wasn't knowledgeable in at my former unit. And I am also more familiar with the sierra software now and can use it for cataloging and classification as well. *'Bryan' {19yrs at previous department, 1 year at current department}*.

I have been optimistic about this transfer and I was not wrong at all, because it has benefitted me a lot in my capacity as a library staff. I have gained knowledge about the numerous e-resources for academic research, E-resources and use of referencing software, setting up of computers for students' use, troubleshooting network and internet problem, and many more. *'James' {19yrs at previous department, 1 year at current department}*.

I love my new unit, especially the teamwork, the exposure to learning and getting to know new things, the opportunity to serve several clients, and the availability of WIFI for both customers and personal use. *'Akos' {20yrs at previous department; 1 year in new department}*.

It is interesting to note that, some respondents were particularly happy about being transferred to the main library because it gave them a lot of exposure. For instance, a respondent said:

I like the fact that my transfer was to the Balme Library. The Balme library is like the head office of the UGLS and staff should always yearn to work there instead of running away. I think conditions of service elsewhere, I mean in other libraries, should be made same everywhere at least to serve as motivation to staff *'Liza {15yrs at the previous department; 1year in new department}'*.

Transfer resistance

Contrariwise, it could not have been all rosy as some respondents also complained about issues in their new units, and hence lamented on their continued displeasure about the transfers due to factors such as poor infrastructure, gossip, lack of teamwork, poor working conditions, unreliable IT infrastructure, unserviceable computers, the existence of very old collections, and poor sanitation. These feelings were most succinctly captured by a respondent:

I still do not feel happy about the transfer. I prefer where I was and I will choose that a thousand times over this new place. The sanitation situation here is very bad, with unreliable IT infrastructure, unserviceable PCs. and very old collections. There is a complete absence of staff togetherness because of sectional groupings, with a lot of gossiping and rumor moving among staff. And the 'the clock-in system I met here is novel to me and is giving me and some of my colleagues who were transferred here a lot of stress *'Kwame' {16yrs at the current department; 1year in new department}'*.

Transfer Duration

On the appropriate duration for transfer of staff within the UGLS, the post-exit interviews establish the sentiments of respondents on the time staff should spend at a unit before transfer. Almost 90% of the respondents indicated that transfer was good and should be done regularly and consistently, preferably in a period of 5-6 years as presented in figure 2.

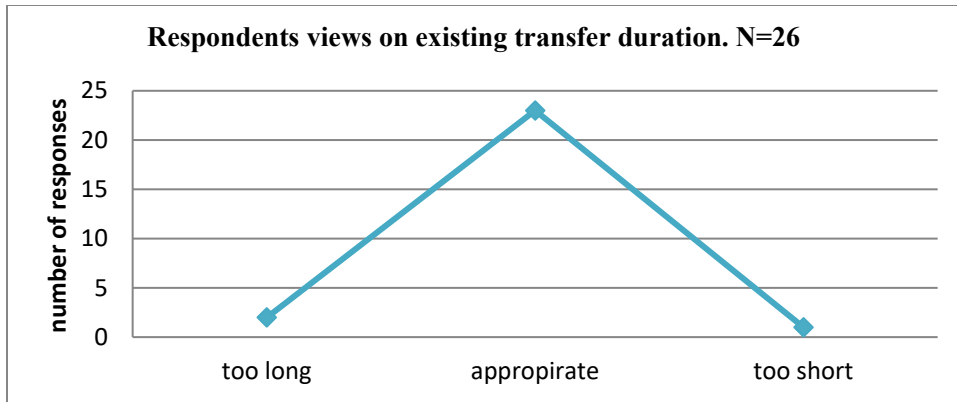


Figure 2: Respondents views on transfer duration: Post-Transfer

Respondents-recommendations

Respondents addressed several issues and grievances when asked to make some recommendations on how best they think staff transfers should be rolled out within the UGLS. Recommendations were centered on prior notice to staff, considering the transfer of experienced staff, and transfer duration during the post-exit interviews.

On prior notification, a respondent advised:

The transfer is never a demotion but when it comes suddenly when you are not prepared it poses a little challenge. I will recommend that staff going to be transferred should be notified earlier to prepare one's state of mind emotionally and psychologically. *'Kofi' {13yrs at the previous department; 1year in new department}*

Other respondents also made some recommendations relative to the transfer of experienced staff as follows:

Transferring of staff should be done properly because in some libraries where the staff are many, for instance, the law faculty library which is a special library, they consider one experienced library staff who will give the new transferred staff orientation so that they will find the work easy. As such, experienced staff should be retained in all sections during transfers so that the new ones will learn from them'. *'Jane' {11yrs at previous department; 1year in new department}*

There are some library staff who have some level of expertise that others do not have and I feel these should be considered before thinking about transferring them. Because these transfers when done based on the number of years spent will render some affected staff less used where they will be transferred to. *'Kwesi' {21yrs at previous department; 1year in new department}*

Other recommendations were also provided on the number of years staff should spend in a unit before transfers are carried out, and these were well captured in the response provided by two of the respondents when they said:

The transfers are on point and should be carried out frequently within the various departments. The time of transfer by the university which is a minimum of 6 years in a particular unit as am told is more than appropriate and should be strictly adhered to. *'Ella' {21yrs at previous department; 1year in new department}*

In my opinion, transfers are good for all organizations and the UGLS is no exception because when people stay at a unit for too long, they sometimes feel too comfortable and may not even work as they should. So, 6 years for a unit is very accurate and I think we should all comply with it. *'Liza' {15yrs at previous department; 1year in new department}*

Six of the interviewees disclosed that there were no proper handoff notes at their new departments, and this made work very difficult for them. Such sentiments were well captured in the statements made by 'Jack:'

I like where I am currently working. But the only challenge I have is that there is no formal documentation on what is done or required to be done here. When I was leaving my old department, I at least left a 10-page document on how things are done at the library for the next person coming in. but I did not come to meet such document, and there is only a national service person here who just came and does not also know anything so I have to study the whole system and start everything afresh. I will kindly recommend that handover notes be made compulsory for all of us. *Jack' {16yrs at previous department; 1year in new department}*

Three of the library staff, also lamented that the heads of the units where they were transferred to seem reluctant to teach them or train them on their new roles. A library staff for instance stated:

Madam, I think that heads of units should be told that we are library staff and hence can do the work when we are trained. Am only been here for just one year and beginning to feel less used and bored because I have not received any training from the head. I don't know if it is because I am a junior staff *Duke' {18yrs at the previous department; 1year in new department}*

Another staff also complained:

Personally, transfers are good because it allows one to learn new things. However, I did not like this transfer where some staff were refused or rejected into the new department. The University and management of UGLS should try to resolve this issue and ensure that transferred staff are accepted wherever they are transferred. *'Mia' {11yrs at previous department; 1year in new department}*

Other comments made by some respondents include:

Transferred staff should be regularly taken through every phase of training in the library and sponsored to take up courses if need be. *'John' {14yrs at the previous department; 1year in new department}*

Before the transfer periods, staff to be transferred to all other centers should at least be trained in some core library practices such as cataloging and classification. Because some of us were at units where there were no cataloging activities, but when we moved out, we had to catalog the resources in the libraries we were transferred to because we are the only ones in charge and hence do everything including the key aspect which is cataloging. And hence have to come back to the cataloging unit for training which I think is not appropriate. *'Fred' {12yrs at previous department; 1year in new department}*

Discussion

The study was in two parts. First, the study reports result from the pre-exit interviews with library staff who were affected by the transfer, and secondly, responses from interviews with the library staff one year after they were transferred to their new units or departments. The findings from this study unearthed the views of the library staff on changes in the library relative to the transfer of staff and the importance of the transfer outcome, as well as inclusivity in the transfer process. The findings of the study are discussed based on the themes generated from the pre and post interviews with the respondents.

Transfer resistance-negative reactions

Findings from this study showed a clear disparity in the responses from the same participants' pre- and post-interviews on their level of resistance to the transfer, suggesting that 77% of the respondents who were unhappy and felt frustrated or punished, felt happy and appreciative of the transfer one year on in their new units since only 19% of the library staff still maintained their unhappiness about the transfer. Indeed, the teary eyes and frustration on the faces of the respondents during the pre-transfer interviews gave credence to the assertions made by Mehdizadeh (2020) who declared that employees may usually feel frustrated and disturbed when changes in their workstations and assigned work are related to negative reflections such as loss of job, respect or position. In regard to the difficulties associated with implementing change in organizations, Odini (1990) states these are mostly attributed to the fear of it, leading to the resistance exhibited by people as far as they can.

Further, the most explicitly stated concern on the respondents' resistance to the transfer during the pre-exit interviews was related to the sudden nature of the transfers as indicated by 19 (73.1%) of the respondents. This was closely followed by respondents 18 (65.4%) who felt that there was no prior information on the transfer. However, for a successful change program, the

literature on change management (e.g., Ali & Anwar 2021; Japheth & Peter 2018) indicates adherence to some prerequisite standards such as change policy, planning, and more especially the involvement of employees, since change does not occur in a vacuum but requires the readiness, support, and collaboration of employees to be a success. Again, as Baro (2012) reported there cannot be one size for all, and hence no matter the benefits that come along with the change in an organization some employees will remain unhappy about it especially when it directly affects them. This observation was confirmed from the post-exit interviews with the library staff in this study as 19% of them remained unhappy about the transfers one year on. It is however interesting to note that factors listed as elements to their dissatisfaction about the transfer during the pre-exit interviews as indicated in table 2, were different from those mentioned in the post-exit interviews presented in table 3. Indeed, Lauer (2021) cautioned that employees may always not be comfortable with changes in organizations no matter the benefits that come along with them.

Transfer Non-Resistance-Positive Reactions

From the responses, only a few of the library staff 6 (23.1%) reacted positively to the transfer during the pre-exit interviews. As the literature alludes, given that the inevitability is obvious, change in organizations is mostly not accepted by people especially when they do not understand why the change is being made (Odini 1990). Conversely, the majority of the respondents 21 (80.8%) exhibited some level of excitement about the transfer during the post-exit interviews suggesting that the transfer has been beneficial to them as library staff. Olorunsola (2000) has stated empathically that whilst there may certainly be some level of negative response, the resistance to job rotation when introduced and implemented in the library may be minimal or insignificant. Essentially, library staff reported the opportunity offered them after the transfer as a way of learning new knowledge 21 (80.8%), acquiring new library experiences 20 (77%), overcoming boredom and monotony 14 (53.8%), encouraging teamwork 10 (38.5%), and exposure to new library IT infrastructure and resources 19 (73.1%). This finding supports that of Perdue and Piotrowski (2021), Earney and Martins (2009); Adomi (2015), Olorunsola (2000), Van Wyk, Swarts & Mukonza (2018) who have supported job transfer in academic libraries and have recognized positive reactions from library staff on their transfer from one unit to another and have generally reported on the benefits of job transfer in libraries. Undeniably, the transfer of employees from one unit to another enables them to be involved in different aspects of the job (Adomi 2015). Equally, with the nature of the library profession, it is anticipated that library staff engaged in one type of job routine at a particular unit over a long period may inevitably become bored and lack of skill or knowledge in other aspects of the library work.

Transfer Duration

The third most pressing issue submitted by the library staff during the pre- and post-exit interviews was on the number of years a library staff member should spend in a particular unit before transfer. Although in existence, the challenge in the library was that the accepted regular rotation of staff in the university as outlined by the Human Resource and Organisational Development Directorate (HRODD) of the university (maximum of 6 years) somehow never affected library personnel, resulting in some library staff who have remained in the same section for 20 years or more as shown in table 1. Such staff, Adomi (2015) reports, may not be happy doing the same job for such a long time in their libraries. Responses from both interview periods were clear that library staff did not know the existing transfer policy of the University. Though respondents acknowledged visible improvements in the way transfers are made relative to the time of transfer, the periods proposed by the respondent's pre-and post-exit interviews indicate support for the already existing staff eligible transfer years of the University, as 21 (80.8%) and 23 (88.5%) of the library staff agreed that staff should be transferred after a minimum of 5years and maximum of 10years years respectively. Indeed, Adomi (2015), reported on how 67 professional librarians in seven university libraries in Nigeria complained of boredom for working and performing the same repetitive duties as cataloguers for 8, 12, and 14 years.

Recommendations from Respondents

The library staff at the post-exit interview were asked to make some recommendations on the transfer processes within the UGLS. The interviewees' comments here bring up some important issues relative to staff transfer and change management in libraries. The comments made by the interviewees indicated the respondents hold similar but different views about job rotation in their library. All the respondents 26 (100%) mentioned as a form of recommendation that the university and library management should at least provide them with prior information about the transfer, to enable them to plan and prepare both physically and emotionally for the transfer. A job rotation strategy must be communicated to all stakeholders of an organization, including the employees whose involvement and consent should be sought during the development and implementation of such strategies (Van Wyk, Swarts & Mukonza 2018).

Further, the retention of staff with some level of experience or skill in a particular department was another contention raised by the interviewees, as they lament that library staff who have some knowledge or know-how in some library activities should be considered and retained in their units due to the skills they possess. Adomi (2005) noted that library managers

may not transfer a library staff member from one unit to another irrespective of the number of years spent in that unit because (1) he or she may be the only one with the skill enough to handle a particular task in the library, (2) staff of the library may be inadequate or (3) out of absolute ignorance of the benefits that could be derived from such exercise. Adomi (2005) however cautioned that no matter the reason for non-transfer of some library staff, when retained on a particular duty post for several years, they are deprived of the privileges and benefits of a job transfer, and also exposed to the numerous disadvantages associated with not transferring which can lead to job dissatisfaction. That said, the successful implementation of a job rotation exercise in the library is dependent on planning and ensuring that the right people are posted in the right places, as job rotation is very effective when competent staff is available to move around (Olorunsola 2000).

Additionally, the findings from the post-exit interviews indicated the absence of proper handing over notes at the units where the library staff were transferred to. Generally, staff transferred to another department or unit adjust and fit into their new roles in diverse ways. For instance, 44.2% of the library staff from seven Nigerian university libraries were reported to have learned what was required for their new task formally from handing over notes or files from their new units or department, 61.5% also learned the task of the new department informally by asking the staff in the new department a wide variety of questions to acquaint themselves with the new unit, whilst 51.9% of the library staff also learned the requirements of their roles through constant observation of the work patterns of staff in the new department. In instances where there was no formal handing over documents, nor staff to ask questions or clear observations to make, library staff resorted to the trial-and-error methods of performing their roles, which according to the study may be costly and risk-prone (Adomi 2005).

Additionally, a handful of the respondents also complained about the way they were received and treated by the heads of units on arrival at the departments. Three (11.5%) of the library staff indicated that the heads at their units were not ready to teach them anything concerning what the department does since they were 'junior staff'. This finding concurs with the report from an interview with the university librarian at the Niger Delta University, Amassoma, Nigeria, when Baro (2012) disclosed that, generally, librarians are known to hoard knowledge instead of sharing with their colleagues or subordinates. Consequently, Baro (2012) reported that some of the supervisors or heads of departments where the transferred library staff reported seemed reluctant and unwilling to pass the practical knowledge/skills to the new staff especially when they are on temporal appointments. Conversely, the nature of the library work requires the transfer of the requisite skills to especially new and inexperienced librarians to enable them to

develop their skills to fit into the present information age. That said, Baro (2012) argued that some library staff transferred to other units are also sometimes not devoted to learning their new roles, especially when transferred to some departments such as cataloging and classification and e-library, as such departments are usually perceived as difficult areas.

Conclusion

The role of change in routine library functions continues to remain topical in academic libraries. Undeniably, relieving library staff of some of the monotony associated with the routine library work cannot be over-emphasized. Indeed, the transfer of staff from one duty post to another is a necessity in academic libraries. The literature has suggested an array of benefits that arises from change relative to job rotation and job transfer, many of which have been confirmed in this study. This study's findings revealed that although some negative reactions resulted from the initial perception of the change process, a number of the library staff who expressed their displeasure about the transfer during the interviews later appreciated the management decision and were satisfied with the transfer program as a way of developing and acquiring new skills and building relationships with colleagues. In particular, the study's findings show that the transfer program enabled the library staff to acquire some core library and information technology skills which enabled them to work effectively in the digital environment. The overall conclusion drawn from this study is that the transfer of library staff from one department or section to another has had a positive impact on the staff of the library.

Recommendations for Academic Libraries

Findings from this study put forward the inevitability of change management in academic libraries relative to staff rotation but also record the neglect of consistent staff transfer exercised in the academic library surveyed. The literature, however, unequivocally indicates that an organization that seeks to broaden its occupational horizon, as well as that of its staff, would rotate its staff, as job rotation is described as a win-win strategy where both the employees and organizations benefit. Given the study findings, it is recommended that the University should emphasize the benefits and purpose of the transfer exercise to make sense of the existing ad hoc staff movement. This the University can achieve through collaborating with the university library to come up with clear staff transfer criteria concerning the existing policy on staff rotation to ensure that transfers of library staff are carried out impartially and consistently. This policy should consider the transfer of library staff from one unit to another as a non-punitive process and also consider job rotation as a positive measure towards the achievement of the organizational goals

and objectives. Moreover, affected library staff, and the heads of units must be involved during the change implementation process about the critical need for educating library staff about the need for change relative to job transfer objectives and implications.

References

- Adebayo, Oyeronke, Michael Opeoluwa Fagbohun, Ugwunwa Chinyere Esse, and Nwanne Mary Nwokeoma. 2019. "Change Management in the Academic Library: Transition from Print to Digital Collections." In *Digital Curation: Breakthroughs in Research and Practice* 19-40. IGI Global.
- Adeyoyin, Samuel Olu, Florence Agbeze-Unazi, Olatundun Oluwatoyin Oyewunmi, Adewale Isau Adegun, and Rafiu Olabamiji Ayodele. 2015. "Effects of Job Specialization and Departmentalization on Job Satisfaction among the Staff of a Nigerian University Library." *Library Philosophy & Practice*. (e-journal).
<https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/33146591.pdf>
- Adomi, Esharenana E. 2006. "Job rotation in Nigerian university libraries." *Library Review* 55 (1): 66-74.
- Ali, Bayad Jamal, and Govand Anwar. 2021. "The mediation role of change management in employee development." *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences* 6 (2): 361-374.
- Atkinson, Jeremy. 2021. "Technology and change management in academic libraries: An overview and literature review." *Technology, Change, and the Academic Library*: 11-32.
- Baro, Emmanuel E. 2012. "Job rotation program evaluation: the Niger Delta University library." In *Aslib Proceedings* 64(4), 388-404.
- Boff, Colleen, and Catherine, Cardwell. 2020. "Anchoring Change: Using the Kotter Change Management Framework to Analyze & Facilitate Change in Academic Libraries." *Faculty Publications*. 4076. https://digital.stpetersburg.usf.edu/fac_publications/4076
- Dukić, Gordana, Darko Dukić, and Goran Kozina. 2017 "Change management in information institutions." *Malaysian Journal of Library & Information Science* 22(3): 53-68.
- Earney, Sally, and Ana Martins. 2009. "Job rotation at Cardiff University library service: a pilot study." *Journal of librarianship and information science* 41(4): 213-226.
- Griffith-Cooper, Bea, and Karyl King. 2010. "The change readiness rubric." *Handbook of Improving Performance in the Workplace: Vol. 1-3*: 392-417.
- Ik, Muo, and Adebayo Adepoju Azeez. 2020. "Organisational green behavioral change: the role of change management." *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Knowledge*, 8 (1), 34-48.
- Jalagat, Revenio. 2016. "The impact of change and change management in achieving corporate goals and objectives: Organizational perspective." *International Journal of Science and Research* 5(11): 1233-1239.
- Japheth, Murila, and Otieno, Peter. 2018. "Attitude towards job rotation in Kenyan university libraries." *East African Journal of Science and Technology*, 8(1), 1-12.

- Kamila, Kanchan. 2013. "Impact of ICT on the changing roles of the librarian, other library and information science (LIS) professionals, and managerial change". In *Design, Development, and Management of Resources for Digital Library Services*, 328-341. IGI Global.
- Khan, Mohd Shahnawaz, and Kamal, Mohammad Amjad. 2016. "Marketing of library and information services in university libraries: A practical experience". <http://dspace.daffodilvarsity.edu.bd:8080/handle>
- Lauer, Thomas. 2021. "*Barriers to Change*. In *Change Management*". 29-44. Springer, Berlin, Heidelberg.
- Levy, Moria. 2021. "Change management serving knowledge management and organizational development: Reflections and review". In *Research Anthology on Digital Transformation, Organizational Change, and the Impact of Remote Work* (990-1004). IGI Global.
- Lientz, Bennet, and Kathryn Rea. 2004. "Breakthrough IT change management: How to get enduring change results." Amsterdam: Elsevier Butterworth–Heinemann. McCormick. <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/mono/10.4324/9780080500287/breakthrough-change-management-bennet-lientz-kathryn-rea>
- Mehdizadeh, Amir, Alexander Vinel, Qiong Hu, Mark C. Schall Jr, Sean Gallagher, and Richard F. Seek. 2020. "Job rotation and work-related musculoskeletal disorders: a fatigue-failure perspective." *Ergonomics*, 63(4), 461-476.
- Moran, John W., and Baird K. Brightman. 2001. "Leading organizational change." *Career Development International*, 6(2), 111-119.
- Odini, Cephas. 1990. "The management of change in a library service". *Library Review*. 39(4).
- Olorunsola, Richard. 2000. "Job rotation in academic libraries: the situation in a Nigerian university library. *Library management*." 21(2), 94-98.
- Sidikova, Michaela. 2011. "*The impact of change management on employee's motivation: A case of Cargotec Shared Service Centre*." Bachelor Thesis., Turku University of Applied Sciences.
- Soehner, Catherine. 2014. "Change Management in Libraries: An Essential Competency for Leadership." Proceedings of the IATUL Conferences. <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/iatul/2014/plenaries/14>
- Van Wyk, Anna Elizabeth, Ilze Swarts, and Chipso Mukonza. 2018 "The influence of the implementation of job rotation on employees' perceived job satisfaction." *International Journal of Business and Management*, 13(11), 89-101.
- Wang, T., Olivier, D. F., & Chen, P. (2020). Creating individual and organizational readiness for change: conceptualization of system readiness for change in school education. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 1-25.

Wang, Ting, Dianne F. Olivier, and Peiyong Chen. 2020. "Creating individual and organizational readiness for change: conceptualization of system readiness for change in school education." *International Journal of Leadership in Education*: 1-25.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2020.1818131>

Perpetua S Dadzie (psdadzie@ug.edu.gh) is a professor of Information Studies at the Department of Information Studies, University of Ghana and **Monica Mensah** (momensah@ug.edu.gh) is a Lecturer in the at the Department of Information Studies, University of Ghana

Published: March 2022