

An Explanatory Sequential Mixed Methods Study of Work-Related Burnout
in Southeastern Academic Librarians

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ABSTRACT

This explanatory sequential mixed-methods study examined the prevalence of work-related burnout among academic librarians in the southeastern United States, focusing on its relationship with demographics, perceived leadership practices, and turnover intention. The study also aimed to understand how leadership practices influence work-related burnout in this population. Data were collected in two phases from a sample of 512 academic librarians. Phase I (quantitative) utilized the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory's work-related subscale and the Leadership Practices Inventory: Observer, while Phase II (qualitative) included two open-ended questions from an online survey and 17 semi-structured interviews. Quantitative results revealed significant differences in work-related burnout based on age, years in position, and turnover intentions, with no effects for sex or race. A significant relationship was found between leadership practices and burnout, with leadership practices explaining approximately 15% of the variance as indicated by an R^2 value of 0.151. Qualitative findings highlighted two leadership practices, Enable Others to Act and Model the Way, as having the most impact on work-related burnout, although external factors (e.g., work overload, staffing) were also identified as significant. Nearly half of the academic librarians were considering leaving their positions due to work-related burnout. This study offers valuable insights for academic library leadership, professional organizations, and institutional administration by providing evidence-based intervention strategies. It uniquely contributes to the professional literature by using instruments not widely used in the academic library context. The findings offer important implications for further research and practical applications in the academic library context. To reduce work-related burnout, leaders should serve as role models and focus on empowering academic librarians to reduce work-related burnout, cultivate a supportive work environment, and improve librarian retention.

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Chapter I

Introduction to the Study

Burnout thrives in organizations when there is a discrepancy between the nature of the job and the nature of the people (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). When job demands outpace job resources, employees are often left feeling exhausted and disengaged (Demerouti et al., 2001). In 2022, the American Psychological Association (APA) reported that burnout and stress were ubiquitous and registering at all-time highs across many professions (Abramson, 2022). In addition to common on-the-job stressors, many new stressors were introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic; these new stressors have now become persistent and may heighten the risk of burnout for anyone already exposed to chronically stressful conditions (Abramson, 2022; Gewin, 2021; Pope-Ruark, 2022). As the largest health challenge faced by the world in the 21st century, the unexpected COVID-19 pandemic certainly impacted libraries (Charbonneau & Vardell, 2022; Griggs-Taylor & Lee, 2022; Heady et al., 2021; Knipe et al., 2020; Raya & Sriborisutsakul, 2022; Richards, 2020; Rysavy et al., 2021; Salvesen & Berg, 2021). However, stress was evidenced pre-pandemic among librarians as well (Affleck, 1996; Burke et al., 2009; Farler & Broady-Preston, 2012; Ferriero & Powers, 1982; Petek, 2018; Shupe et al., 2015; Smith et al., 2020; Watstein, 1979).

Oftentimes, chronic, unresolvable stress leads to work-related burnout (Bianchi et al., 2014; Smith et al., 2020). A psychological syndrome, burnout has been characterized by physical fatigue, emotional exhaustion, and depersonalization resulting in negativity and inefficiency on the job (Kristensen et al., 2005; Maslach et al., 1997; World Health Organization, 2019). Burnout

can occur in the workplace regardless of the type of work an individual does (Demerouti et al., 2001). However, from its initial recognition, researchers continued to observe that burnout occurred frequently in occupations involving employees who worked closely with other people (Affleck, 1996; Bartlett, 2018; Freudenberger, 1974; Maslach et al., 1997; Pines & Aronson, 1988). DelGuidice (2011) succinctly stated, “burnout is the unfortunate side effect of a career that puts the needs of others first” (p. 23). Because work-related burnout is a serious human resource challenge that often impacts job performance and employee retention, researchers have conducted many investigations into workplace stress and burnout occurring within the helping professions (Grochowska et al., 2022; Lee & Cha, 2023; McCormack & Cotter, 2013; Roloff et al., 2022; Stosic et al., 2022). Helping professionals regularly provide comprehensive support to diverse clients: emotional, informational, practical, and social. Librarianship falls within the “helping” professions (O’Neill, 2018).

The professional literature has increasingly shown work-related burnout within librarians continues to be a real and growing global phenomenon (Adebayo et al., 2018; Agyei et al., 2019; Christian, 2015; DelGuidice, 2011; Farler & Broady-Preston, 2012; Heady et al., 2020; Petek, 2018; Raya & Sriborisutsakul, 2022). Both public librarians and academic librarians experience burnout (Farler & Broady-Preston, 2012; Kendrick, 2017; Nardine, 2019; Nelson, 1987; Petek, 2018; Shupe et al., 2015; Wood et al., 2020). This is not surprising as burnout continues to be documented and researched within the halls of academia world-wide (Al Serhan & Houjeir, 2020; Alves et al., 2019; Pope-Ruark, 2022; Redondo-Flórez et al., 2020; Rocha et al. 2020; Sestili et al., 2018; Summers et al., 2019). Researchers recognized that burnout thrived in higher education environments due to the cultural elements that impacted faculty and administration (Pope-Ruark, 2022). These cultural elements included a competitive achievement orientation,

productivity expectations, scarcity of resources, and continual expectation escalation (Al Serhan & Houjeir, 2020; Alves et al., 2019; Pope-Ruark, 2022; Sabagh et al., 2018). Requirements to publish, commitment to institutional and community service, demands for grant writing, rigorous requirements in research, the ability for procuring tenure, and conflicts with leadership all took their toll on already harried faculty (Alves et al., 2019; Pope-Ruark, 2022; Sestili et al., 2018). In many ways, the academic library could be considered a microcosm of the academic institution (Becher, 2019). Academic librarians also contended with the abovementioned cultural elements present within higher education and their applications (Fyn et al., 2019; Kane, 2018; Kantor, 2022; Kendrick, 2017; Petek, 2018; Stine, 2022).

Work-related burnout in academic librarians exists and needs special consideration (Holm et al., 2022; Nardine, 2019). Due to the lack of empirical and definitive evidence, McCormack and Cotter (2013) called for more high-quality research concerning work-related burnout in librarians attributed to shrinking budgets, technology, and organizational changes. Later, Nardine (2019) declared “the formal assessment of burnout in academic librarianship is in its infancy,” indicating a need for the further study of burnout in the academic library population (p. 523). Presently, the assessment of burnout in academic librarianship must continue to inform leadership in academic libraries and administration in universities that grant Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) degrees (Raya & Sriborisutsakul, 2022). To assess this phenomenon within the academic library setting, leadership must gauge its prevalence, understand the role of leaders, and consider the professional impact of burnout overall. Appropriate measures and training could then be determined to lessen the impact work-related burnout has on academic librarians. Potentially, this would promote positive work environments, thus extending academic librarians’ continuity of service and allowing academic librarians to

provide better support for their students, faculty, and staff (Heady et al., 2020; Keating & Cardenas, 2022; Kennedy & Garewal, 2020).

Statement of Problem

Work-related burnout in academic librarians is an ongoing challenge (Holm et al., 2022; Petek, 2018; Shupe et al., 2015; Wood et al., 2020). When librarians experience burnout, it impacts their job satisfaction and the quality of support they provide for the students, faculty, and staff at their institutions of higher learning (Holm et al., 2022; Wood et al., 2020). Holm et al. (2022) revealed the professional interest in this growing phenomenon within academic libraries by assessing the growth rate of scholarly publications addressing the burnout experience among academic librarians. In the 1990s, the growth rate on these publications was 18%. Holm et al. credited the internet's development and demands for service 24/7 as the impetus for this increase. The publication of academic librarian burnout literature exploded in the new millennium during the digital age of librarianship. The 84.6% exponential growth rate indicated academic librarians were experiencing work-related burnout and were desperately trying to prevent, manage, and recover from this pervasive phenomenon (Holm et al., 2022). The topics addressed within this proliferation of academic librarian burnout publications included role ambiguity, work overload, budget cuts, difficult patrons, technostress, low morale, and poor leadership (Ennis, 2005; Kendrick, 2017; Ortega, 2017; Petek, 2018; Shupe et al., 2015). These work-related demands and stressors exacerbated this syndrome in academic librarians. When left unaddressed for an extended amount of time with little access to appropriate job resources, burnout often ensued (Demerouti et al., 2001). Academic library leadership played a significant role in dealing with increased job demands and decreased job resources evidenced within the academic library setting (Miles & Markgren, 2022).

Wood et al. (2020) recognized the potential impact academic library leadership had on workplace culture, indicating effective leadership practices may palliate work-related burnout in academic librarians. Miles and Markgren's (2022) study concurred, finding that burnout experiences within the academic library were less severe when positive leaders were present, active, and engaged. Contrariwise, the literature indicated poor leadership led to low morale and burnout in academic librarians, which in turn impacted work performance, job satisfaction, and attrition rates (Kendrick, 2017; Kennedy & Garewal, 2020; McCormack & Cotter, 2013; Ortega, 2017). When surveyed, 565 academic librarians indicated dissatisfaction with library administration (72.06%) and direct supervisors (63.87%) as reasons they departed from a previous position (Fyn et al., 2019). This is unfortunate as Cottrell (2011) stated, "library managers and their supervisors do not benefit from new librarians every two years as much as they benefit from librarians that believe in their institution and stay with it" (p. 190). Attrition and high turnover are costly to institutions, and the academic library is being impacted by both (Allen et al., 2010; Fyn et al., 2019; Heady et al., 2020). Fewer academic librarians in post-secondary institutions impeded crucial student support, directly impacting retention and graduation rates (Emmons & Wilkinson, 2011; Mezick, 2007).

Purpose of the Study

Given the impact of work-related burnout, the multifaceted purpose of this study included the following: (1) to measure the prevalence of work-related burnout in academic librarians in the southeastern region of the United States; (2) to examine the relationships (if any) work-related burnout has with demographics, perceived leadership practices, and turnover intention; and (3) to explain how leadership practices impact work-related burnout in academic librarians. Initially, this was done through the utilization of data science techniques. The factors included

demographics, Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI) work subscale scores, Leadership Practices Inventory: Observer (LPI: Observer) composite scores, LPI: Observer individual trait scores, and a question about turnover intention. Further explanation was sought through semi-structured interviews where qualitative data were collected and analyzed. The relationships discovered and examined may provide library leadership with a better understanding of how to successfully prevent and manage work-related burnout. The population included in this study was academic librarians in the southeastern region of the United States.

Research Questions

This study investigated work-related burnout of academic librarians who currently were employed in the southeastern region of the United States and their perceived library leadership practices, seeking to answer the following questions:

RQ1: Is there a relationship between the characteristics of academic librarians (sex, age, race, time in current position, and turnover intentions) in the southeastern region of the United States and the self-identification of work-related burnout as measured by the total work-related burnout subscale?

RQ2: Is there a relationship between the perception of library leadership practices of academic librarians in the southeastern region of the United States as measured by the LPI: Observer and the self-identification of work-related burnout as measured by the total work-related burnout subscale?

RQ3: What are the experiences of academic librarians in the southeastern region of the United States concerning the impact library leadership practices have on work-related burnout?

Research Methodology

Using an explanatory sequential mixed methods design occurring in two phases, this study measured work-related burnout prevalence amongst academic librarians in the southeastern region of the United States, seeking to examine and explain burnout's relationships with demographics, library leadership practices, and turnover intentions. During the first phase of the study, quantitative data were collected online using the Academic Librarian Leadership and Burnout Survey. Qualitative data were collected during the second phase of the study. In this follow-up to the quantitative results, semi-structured, confidential interviews collected data to explain the initial quantitative findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

Significance of the Study

Work-related burnout is impacting academic librarians (Holm et al., 2022; Wood et al., 2020). New pressures and demands are constant in the academic library for both leaders and followers (Dohe et al., 2023; Julien et al., 2022; Kaufman et al., 2023; Lundstrom et al., 2021). In this post-COVID era, librarians continue to contend with less-than-ideal working conditions, tightening budgets, and technostress, all of which may be contributing factors to burnout (Dixon, 2022; Kennedy & Garewal, 2020; Kennedy & McGurr, 2023). Assessing the prevalence and predictors of work-related burnout within the academic librarians in the southeastern region of the United States post-pandemic, examining the relationship between work-related burnout and current leadership, and investigating the probability of attrition due to work-related burnout could make significant contributions to the current literature and inform those in leadership positions.

Researchers have long noted the dearth of literature on academic library leadership; evidenced in the professional literature was a continued call for more research in this area (Ashiq

et al., 2021; Aslam, 2019; Harland et al., 2018; Kennedy & McGurr, 2023; Ortega, 2017; Weiner, 2003; Weiner et al., 2009). Wood et al. (2020) noted a gap in the professional literature specifically focused on academic library administrators and academic librarian burnout, expressing a need for future research to consider the causation and prevention of work-related burnout in academic librarians and the relationship work-related burnout has with leadership. The findings from this study helped fill this gap in the current literature.

This study also contributed to the broader current literature on burnout by providing information collected by the CBI. Adding this to information gathered by other valid and reliable tools (i.e., Maslach Burnout Inventory, Oldenburg Burnout Inventory) will provide researchers a more holistic understanding of the burnout phenomenon (Ogunsuji et al., 2022). It also provides valuable data that could be later used for instrument comparison research and pre, mid, and post COVID-19 pandemic burnout rate comparisons (Astrua et al., 2007; Haymaker et al., 2023; Raya & Sriborisutsakul, 2022; Schutte et al., 2000; van Dierendonck et al., 2023).

The findings from this study were informative for academic library leadership, postsecondary administration, professional Library and Information Science (LIS) organizations, and leadership in other helping professions. Academic libraries contribute to student confidence, student success, student learning, student persistence, student engagement, and student retention, all of which are important in supporting a post-secondary's mission attainment efforts which include degree completion (Appleton, 2020; Association of College and Research Libraries, 2017; Mayer et al., 2020; O'Kelly et al., 2023; Oliveira, 2017; Rowe et al., 2021). To optimally provide this support to higher education institutions, academic libraries must retain qualified and motivated library professionals (Emmons & Wilkinson, 2011; Mezick, 2007). Leadership in academic libraries is directly responsible for this endeavor. Postsecondary administration can

utilize the information from the findings of this study to justify allocating the resources necessary to support the endeavors of academic library leadership to attract, support, and maintain a robust team of academic librarians. Those involved in the professional education of future academic librarians as well as current and future leadership within academic libraries who pursue the improvement of academic librarians' job satisfaction, professional performance, retention rates, and overall well-being can use the findings to promote best practices. By evaluating the leadership practices that allay work-related burnout within the academic library setting, the information gleaned from this study could play a pivotal role in expanding library leadership education in LIS programs and in the creation of professional development opportunities for those currently in or aspiring to positions of leadership. Leadership in helping professions outside of the academic library setting could apply the applicable findings from this study to their spheres of influence.

Limitations of the Study

This study may have been impacted by five limitations. First, the study's scope was restricted to academic librarians in the southeastern United States, and the sample size ($n = 512$) may limit the generalizability of the findings to a broader population (Berat et al., 2016). Second, the potential for respondent bias, a known issue in online surveys, could have skewed the results (Andrade, 2020; Barton et al., 2022). Third, the study relied on self-reported data from the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory and the Leadership Practices Inventory: Observer, which are inherently subject to individual interpretation and honesty. Fourth, the thematic analysis employed is susceptible to bias and challenges in replicability, as is common with qualitative research (Proudfoot, 2023). Finally, the timing of data collection at the start of the summer

semester, a period often characterized by a lighter workload for academic librarians, could have influenced the responses regarding burnout and related factors.

Definitions of Terms

Academic librarian. An academic librarian holds an MLIS degree and works within the academic library setting at an institute of higher learning. Academic librarians hold different roles including reference, instruction, administrative, collections, and archival.

Academic library. An academic library affiliated with a higher education institution, such as a college or university. It serves to support the institution's curriculum and the research needs of its institution's faculty, staff, and students.

Attrition. The departure of an employee from their current position.

Burnout. A psychological state of physical, mental, and emotional exhaustion resulting from emotionally demanding, long-term work situations (Pines & Aronson, 1988; Schaufeli & Greenglass, 2001).

Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI). A 19-item generic scale that measures burnout in three domains: personal, work-related, and client-related (Kristensen et al., 2005; Piperac et al., 2021).

The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership. A behavioral framework created by Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner. These practices include Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart (Kouzes & Posner, 2023).

Helping professions. Occupations that support others through the offering of services. These occupations include but are not limited to positions in the fields of mental health, law enforcement, health care, social work, and education.

Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI). A tool created by Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner that assesses five exemplary leadership practices. This 30-item survey measures specific leadership

behaviors as observed by self and others (Kouzes & Posner, 2023).

Southeastern region of the United States. For this study, the southeastern states included Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia.

Technostress. Stress caused by one's inability to cope with information overload due to constant contact with digital technology (Brod, 1984).

Transformational leadership. A leadership strategy that motivates followers beyond self-interest to contribute to the good of the group. It consists of five exemplary leadership practices as defined by Kouzes and Posner (Bass, 1985; Caza et al., 2021; Kouzes & Posner, 2023).

Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters and a reference list. Chapter I is the introduction providing background information, the problem statement, the purpose statement, and this study's significance. Chapter I also contains the research questions and the methodology used in the study. A review of the literature is found within Chapter II. It includes background information on burnout, burnout measures, costs of burnout, organizational theory and burnout, burnout in libraries, burnout attributed to poor leadership, transformational leadership, and Kouzes and Posner's five practices of exemplary leadership. Chapter III focuses on research design, population, and methods of data collection complete with a review of data analyses and consideration of how the human subjects were protected. Chapter IV provides a description of the statistical analyses used to answer Research Questions 1 and 2 as well as the qualitative findings that address Research Question 3. The significance of the study and the implications of the results based on the research questions are described in Chapter V.

Chapter II

Review of the Literature

Academic librarians are suffering from work-related burnout (Wood et al., 2020). This phenomenon has a profound effect on the professional and personal lives of academic librarians, oftentimes influencing job satisfaction, attrition, and even health (Affleck, 1996; Kendrick, 2017). There are multiple causes of this phenomenon in the academic library setting, many of which directly or indirectly may be linked to academic library leadership (Heady et al., 2020). Transformational leadership practices have the potential to prevent and mitigate work-related burnout in the academic library environment as they address the social and psychological needs of academic librarians (Martin, 2018). To better understand the burnout phenomenon in academic librarians employed within the southeastern region of the United States, the following research questions guided this study:

RQ1: Is there a relationship between the characteristics of academic librarians (sex, age, race, time in current position, and turnover intentions) in the southeastern region of the United States and the self-identification of work-related burnout as measured by the total work-related burnout subscale?

RQ2: Is there a relationship between the perception of library leadership practices of academic librarians in the southeastern region of the United States as measured by the LPI: Observer and the self-identification of work-related burnout as measured by the total work-related burnout subscale?

RQ3: What are the experiences of academic librarians in the southeastern region of the United States concerning the impact library leadership practices have on work-related burnout?

The academic librarians' average total work-related burnout score (TWRBS) from the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI) was used to determine the prevalence of burnout among academic librarians in the southeastern region of the United States and what relationships (if any) existed between burnout scores and the independent variables (demographics, LPI: Observer scores, and intentions towards attrition). This literature review will establish a basis for the need to examine relationships that may exist between work-related burnout, leadership practices, and attrition in the academic librarian population by presenting literature relevant to (a) work-related burnout's origins, definitions, measures, and impacts, (b) the conceptual and theoretical frameworks that guided this study, (c) evidence and causes of work-related burnout within librarians, (d) evidence, causes, and impact of work-related burnout within academic librarians, (e) work-related burnout and academic library leadership, (f) academic librarian attrition and its impact, (g) addressing work-related burnout in academic librarians, (h) transformational leadership's impact on burnout, and (i) Kouzes and Posner's five practices of exemplary leadership.

Burnout

When the term *burnout* appeared in the mid-1970s literature, it emerged as a social problem presenting in the United States (Maslach & Schaufeli, 1993). Freudenberger (1974) coined the term *burnout* to describe a phenomenon experienced by volunteers at a drug addiction clinic. Freudenberger recognized burnout as a syndrome, one he too had personally experienced when working long hours as a psychoanalyst and a volunteer in the free clinic (Fontes, 2020). He

described a burnt out individual as being exhausted due to excessive demands on their strength, energy, and resources, unable to adequately perform their job (Freudenberger, 1974).

Freudenberger viewed man as an energy system, indicating energy levels fluctuated between high and low. Individuals prone to burnout were giving too much of themselves in the care of others, expending too much energy (Fontes, 2020; Freudenberger, 1974). Freudenberger assessed it was a common occurrence that manifested itself physically and behaviorally. Initially, the observed physical signs of this phenomenon included exhaustion, fatigue, headaches, gastrointestinal issues, and insomnia. The observed behavioral issues included anger, irritation, frustration, paranoia, and an inability to control feelings. Freudenberger (1975) later realized burnout did not just occur amongst those volunteering to work with addicts in high-stakes situations, but it also extended into the professional realms of business and industry; he discerned burnout usually occurred within the first year in these environments due to several factors. Other researchers began to delve into what these factors were and how they impacted employee burnout. These types of inquiries led to the development of several burnout definitions throughout the years.

Definitions of Burnout

Although researchers who studied burnout differed on their definitions and what constituted burnout, many typically agreed burnout was an individual response to chronic, unmanaged stress at work that evoked exhaustion (Behrend, 2022; Maslach, 2003; World Health Organization, 2019). The experts also recognized this phenomenon often caused psychological, physical, and behavioral damage to individuals which then negatively impacted their productivity on the job and their work relationships (Freudenberger, 1975; Pines & Aronson, 1988; World Health Organization, 2019).

Pines and Aronson (1988). Pines and Aronson (1988) defined burnout as “a state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion caused by long-term involvement in situations that are emotionally demanding” (p. 9). These researchers believed exhaustion (physical, emotional, and mental) was always present although burnout impacted sufferers differently in intensity, duration, frequency, and consequences. In the years that followed, other researchers also defined burnout by focusing on exhaustion (Kristensen et al., 2005; Schaufeli & Greenglass, 2001; Shirom, 1989).

Shirom (1989). Shirom (1989) viewed burnout as unidimensional defining it as “a combination of physical fatigue, emotional exhaustion, and cognitive weariness” (p. 33). Shirom criticized assumptions made by researchers that restricted the burnout phenomenon to only those who worked mostly with people needing assistance. In his opinion, the theory of burnout needed to move outside of the helping professions into other domains. Later, when reflecting upon the study of burnout, Shirom (2005) emphasized the prevalence and the chronic nature of burnout. He expressed a need for future research to include different measures of burnout that included the causes, correlates, and effects of burnout to gain more insight on the burnout phenomenon.

Maslach et al. (1997). Psychology professor, Maslach, and professor of human resource management, Jackson, performed in-depth research on burnout that involved diverse types of employees. Physicians, police officers, teachers, attorneys, and others provided descriptions of their jobs and experiences at work to the researchers; these descriptions helped shape their definition of burnout (McCormack & Cotter, 2013). The resulting definition was included in The Maslach Burnout Inventory Manual; “Burnout is a psychological syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who work with other people in some capacity” (Maslach et al., 1997, p. 192). This

has been the burnout definition most cited in professional literature throughout scholarly publications and empirical research (McCormack and Cotter, 2013).

Kristensen et al. (2005). Kristensen et al. (2005) defined work-related burnout as “the degree of physical and psychological fatigue and exhaustion that is perceived by the person as related to his/her work” (p. 197). These researchers studying burnout considered burnout’s core to be fatigue and exhaustion, thus mirroring what others had previously postulated (Schaufeli & Greenglass, 2001; Shirom, 1989). However, Kristensen et al. also contended the concept of burnout included ascribing fatigue and exhaustion to a specific domain within a person’s life.

World Health Organization (2019). In 2019, the World Health Organization (WHO) included burnout as an occupational phenomenon in their 11th revision of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11). Although not classified as a medical condition, it was a documented reason people contacted health services. The ICD-11 defined burnout as “a syndrome conceptualized as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed” (World Health Organization, n.d., para.1). Also averred was that burnout is a phenomenon that only occurred in the occupational context.

Burnout Measures

Over the last 40 years, researchers have been interested in the assessment of burnout. Researchers have developed instruments to measure burnout and its accompanying symptoms, seeking to assess and quantify burnout through scales and surveys in multiple languages (Berat et al., 2016; Demerouti & Nachreiner, 1998; Edú-Valsania et al., 2022; Fimian & Johnson, 1989; Hadzibajramovic et al., 2020; Kristensen et al., 2005; Maslach et al., 1997; McCormack & Cotter, 2013; Ogunsuji et al., 2022). Three of the most validated burnout measures included the Maslach Burnout Inventory, the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory, and the CBI (Pate et al., 2023).

Maslach Burnout Inventory. The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) scale remains the seminal inventory for assessing burnout in individuals (Nardine, 2019). Originally developed in 1981, it measured burnout in individuals working within helping professions (Edú-Valsania et al., 2022). Based on Maslach et al.'s (1997) multidimensional understanding of burnout, this instrument measured burnout across three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced professional fulfillment. It would become the most frequently used and widely recognized burnout measurement tool for several decades (Berat et al., 2016; Johnson & Page, 2022; Milfont et al., 2008; Ogunsuji et al., 2022; Pate et al., 2023; Schaufeli & Greenglass, 2001). After recognizing burnout also occurred in other professions, a newer version of the MBI was created that was applicable to all occupations, the Maslach Burnout Inventory-General Survey (MBI-GS) (Maslach et al., 1996). Today, there are five validated forms of the MBI: the MBI: Human Services Survey for medical personnel, the MBI: Human Services Survey for human services, the MBI: Educators Survey for educators, the MBI: General Survey, and the MBI: General Survey for students (Mind Garden, n.d.).

Oldenburg Burnout Inventory. The Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI), developed in Germany in 1998, measured two dimensions of burnout: exhaustion and disengagement from work (Demerouti & Nachreiner, 1998). With its creation, the creators sought to rectify one of the psychometric shortcomings evidenced in both the MBI and the MBI-GS, one-sided wording of the items (Pate et al., 2023). Demerouti et al. (2003) explained the subscale items on the MBI and the MBI-GS were all one directional, either all phrased negatively or positively. Also, unlike other instruments focused on human services, the OLBI was crafted to be useful in every occupational environment (Demerouti et al., 2003).

Copenhagen Burnout Inventory. Kristensen et al. (2005) argued the MBI was not in the public domain, was not cross-cultural, and was not able to deliver a unidimensional score. Therefore, the researchers created the CBI. The CBI consisted of three subscales for use in different domains that measured personal burnout, work-related burnout, and client-related burnout, thus attributing fatigue and exhaustion to specific aspects or domains within an individual's life (Pate et al., 2023). The CBI has been used worldwide, especially in healthcare and education settings; researchers have continued to extol its ease of use along with its validity and reliability (Barton et al., 2022; Berat et al., 2016; Bolatov et al., 2021; Chin et al., 2017; Ogunsuji et al., 2021; Rocha et al., 2020; Sestili et al., 2018). More recently, this instrument has been gaining traction among information professionals. Three studies have recently used the CBI to assess work-related burnout within academic librarians; another study assessed work-related burnout in medical and health sciences information professionals who supported systematic reviews (Demetres et al., 2020; Holt et al., 2022; Johnson, 2024; Wood et al., 2020).

Costs of Burnout

Industries, institutions, and organizations incurred severe economic costs resulting from employee burnout (Shirom, 2005). Individuals experienced economical, physical, and mental repercussions from work-related burnout. Ultimately, burnout is negatively associated with quality of life, both personally and professionally (Alves et al., 2019). The reviewed literature highlighted how experiencing burnout impacted sufferers in four areas. McCormack and Cotter (2013) noted changes in behavior, changes in feelings, changes in thinking, and changes in health. Other researchers affirmed these changes related to burnt out individuals. Changes in behavior included withdrawal, absenteeism, irritability, and hostility (Henry et al., 2018; Lo & Herman, 2017; McCormack & Cotter, 2013). Changes in feelings included helplessness,

hopelessness, loss of enthusiasm, low morale, and being overwhelmed (Henry et al., 2018; Kendrick, 2017; Lo & Herman, 2017; McCormack & Cotter, 2013). Changes in thinking included memory problems and an inability to concentrate (Bartlett, 2018; McCormack & Cotter, 2013). Changes in health included fatigue, sleep disturbances, headaches, and overeating (Bartlett, 2018; Dixon, 2022; Lo & Herman, 2017; McCormack & Cotter, 2013).

Organizational & Institutional Costs. As a psychosocial occupational hazard in today's workplaces, burnout costs industries millions of dollars annually (Blanding, 2015; Han et al., 2019; Neill et al., 2022; Paine, 1984). The economic impact of burnout on institutions was also costly; reduced productivity, increasing health insurance premiums, payments for early retirement, and potential disability, medical, and legal costs added up quickly (Minnehan & Paine, 1982). Excessive costs were associated with replacing employees; recruiting, selecting, and training new employees could even exceed the annual salary for the position being filled (Cascio, 2006). The costs of a high turnover rate included more than just financial considerations. The loss of organizational memory and seasoned mentors in addition to work disruptions negatively impacted institutions causing elevated levels of attrition and impacting overall organizational performance (Allen et al., 2010; Fyn et al., 2019).

Burnout comes at a high price for individuals, as employees experiencing burn out are more likely to withdraw from their jobs psychologically and physically, causing a drop in quantity and quality of work (Kaufman et al., 2023; McCormack & Cotter, 2013). Many individuals choose to end a career that has caused their burnout, which in turn leads to a loss of pride, prestige, intrinsic satisfaction, and personal identity (Maslach & Leiter, 1997). This can impact an individual mentally and physically; burnout impacting the health of individuals often resulted in high rates of absenteeism (Behrend, 2022; Jing et al., 2023; Schouteten, 2017). For

instance, Schouteten (2017) surveyed 242 university personnel. Through logistic regression analyses, the researchers determined burnout consistently predicted exceptional absenteeism.

Health Costs. Burnout, a widespread global issue, has impacted various countries to such an extent that it is now recognized as an official medical diagnosis. For example, the Netherlands and Sweden train their physicians and health professionals in the assessment and treatment of this phenomenon (Schaufeli et al., 2009). Burnout was the catalyst for many physical ailments. These included hypertension, acid reflux, headaches, loss of appetite, and gastrointestinal issues (Bartlett, 2018; Hogarth, 2017; Pope-Ruark, 2022). When burnout related health concerns were left unchecked, the possibility of other serious health conditions developing was noted; these included increased cortisol levels, insomnia, diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease (Honkonen, 2006; Penz et al., 2018; Pope-Ruark, 2022). Researchers have also linked work-related burnout to excessive drinking and smoking, drug use, and suicide (Adebayo et al., 2018; Bryan et al., 2018; Hogarth, 2017; Shanafelt et al., 2011).

Honkonen (2006) examined the relationship between physical illness and burnout concluding there existed a significant correlation between the two. The researchers used the MBI and comprehensive health examinations to assess 3,368 Finnish employees. The results demonstrated physical illness was more common in employees experiencing burnout (64%) than those who were not (54%, $p < .001$). The men's results exhibited burnout as being a significant correlate of cardiovascular diseases: 95% CI [1.13, 1.61]. The women's results exhibited burnout as being a significant correlate of musculoskeletal diseases: 95% CI [1.07, 1.38]. Honkonen also noted that the prevalence of these diseases corresponded with the severity of the burnout.

In addition to physical ailments, those suffering from burnout also experienced mental health related issues; these included depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem (Ahola et al., 2005;

Hogarth, 2017; Jing et al., 2023; Pines & Aronson, 1988; Pope-Ruark, 2022). These mental health issues impacted individuals as well as the organizations where they worked. Researchers found psychological syndromes spread from individual to individual within a social network (Hill et al., 2010; Kendrick, 2017, 2020; Rosenquist et al., 2011). Other researchers surmised work-related burnout can also become pervasive throughout an institution or organization (Bakker et al., 2003; Jing et al., 2023; Kaufman et al., 2023).

Organizational Theory and Burnout

When viewing burnout through the broad lens of organizational theory, the consensus was work-related burnout resulted from a combination of organizational stressors and individuals lacking adequate coping strategies and job resources (Edú-Valsania et al., 2022). In the early 90s, Winnubst (1993) recognized the connection between organizational structure, social support, and burnout. He mentioned role conflict, role overload, and role ambiguity as stressors that occurred within organizations. Winnubst also cited a lack of support from supervisors as a contributing factor to work-related burnout. Maslach and Leiter (2008) categorized organizational risk factors contributing to burnout into six domains: workload, control, reward, community, fairness, and values. Later, Edú-Valsania et al. (2022) highlighted workload and control as organizational stressors that contributed to burnout, but they also included emotional labor, role ambiguity and conflict, inadequate supervision, lack of perceived social support, and poor working hours. Most of these triggers directly or indirectly related to leadership. Both Winnubst and Edú-Valsania et al. recognized that leadership played a role in either promoting or mitigating burnout in an organization's employees. There were similar findings throughout the professional literature (Chen & Baron, 2007; Chen et al., 2022; Del Rio et al., 2022; Kelly & Hearld, 2020; Kendrick,

2017; Kennedy & Garewal, 2020; McCormack & Cotter, 2013; Ortega, 2017; Tian & Guo, 2022; Tsang et al., 2022).

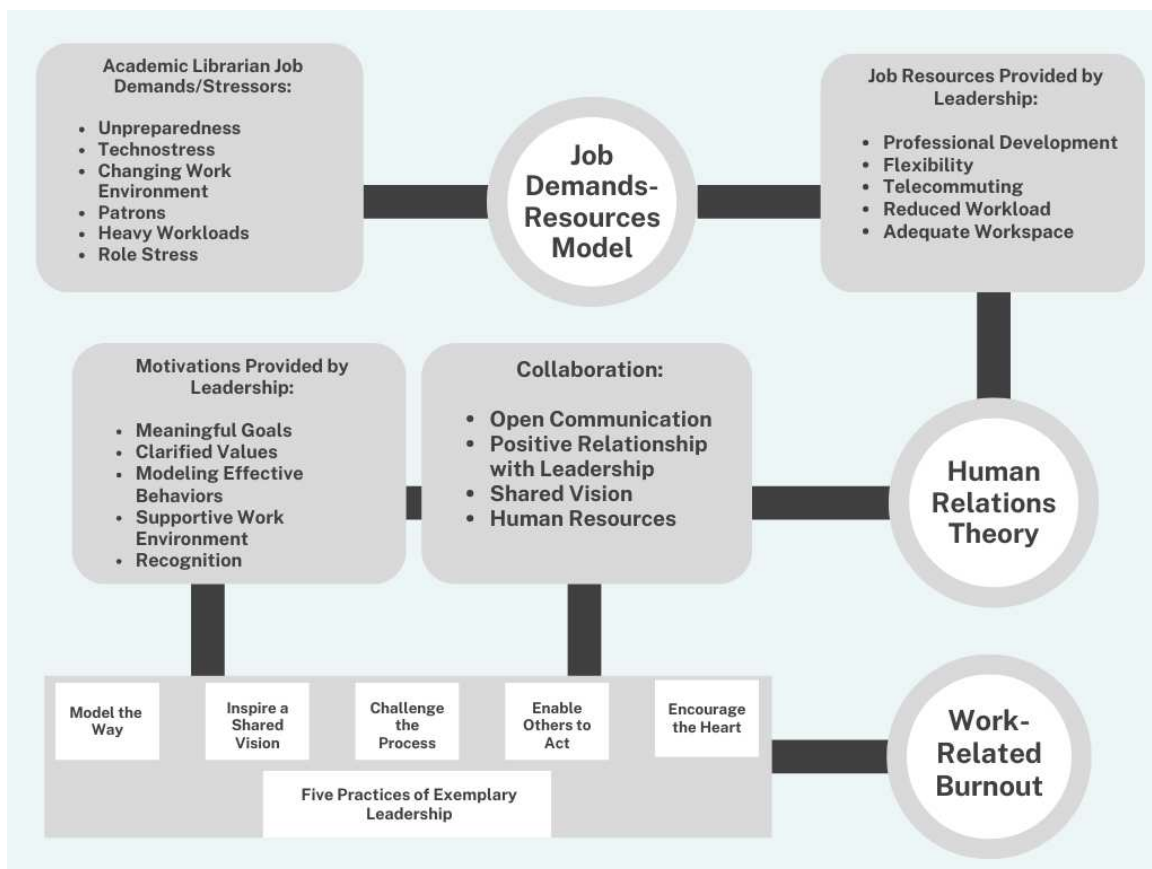
Theoretical Frameworks and Concept Map

Four guiding frameworks were used in this study to synthesize the themes and empirical evidence associated with work-related burnout in academic librarians and work-related burnout's relationship to leadership practices. The Job Demands-Resources model (JD-R) is one of the leading models used for predicting burnout antecedents and outcomes (Sabagh et al., 2018). Demerouti et al. (2001) proposed that working conditions could be broadly categorized into job demands and job resources and thereby could be used to predict burnout. Also informing this study is Mayo's (1933) Human Relations Theory of Management (HRTM), which stressed the importance of the leader-follower relationship and collaboration efforts. Mayo recognized that followers were motivated by more than physical and monetary needs; other motivators were social and psychological in nature (Saxena, 2021). This theory set forth important leadership considerations still relevant today which may impact work-related burnout. Kouzes and Posner (2023) developed a framework consisting of five practices of exemplary leadership. The main thrust of this framework is the leader-follower relationship. In this way, it is an extension of the HRTM that provides leaders with practical suggestions for learning these behaviors and then purposefully implementing them within the work environment to promote a healthy organizational culture. These practices could lessen the impact of work-related burnout within an organization. Finally, Kristensen et al. (2005) proposed measuring burnout by domain. In 2005, Kristensen and her colleagues created the CBI. This study included the work-related subscale of the CBI to ascertain a burnout score related primarily to the respondent's work environment. Kristensen et al.'s premise underpinned the measurement of burnout for this study by providing

the rationale for measuring work-related burnout independently to ascertain the total work-related burnout score (TWRBS). As shown in Figure 1, the frameworks are combined with concepts present within the literature. If library leadership addresses the JD-R model and the HTRM through purposefully implementing the five practices of exemplary leadership, the TWRBS may be impacted.

Figure 1

Theoretical Frameworks and Concepts



Note. Illustration of important concepts and theories related to burnout as pertains to this study.

The Job Demand Resources Model. The JD-R model is a cognitive-emotional model that attempts to explain human performance under stress (Hogarth, 2017). This approach assumed burnout was a result of an imbalance between job demands and job resources (Edú-

Valsania et al., 2022). A succinct model, it included four basic components to predict burnout: job demands, job resources, exhaustion, and disengagement (Demerouti et al., 2001). Demerouti et al. (2001) proposed employees developed burnout symptoms when job demands were high and job resources were limited. Demerouti et al. defined job demands as organizational, social, or physical features of a job that required constant mental or physical efforts. Examples of exhaustion-inducing job demands included work overload, unfavorable physical environments, interpersonal conflict, job insecurity, role ambiguity, and productivity expectations (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti et al., 2001; Pope-Ruark, 2022; Schaufeli & Taris, 2014).

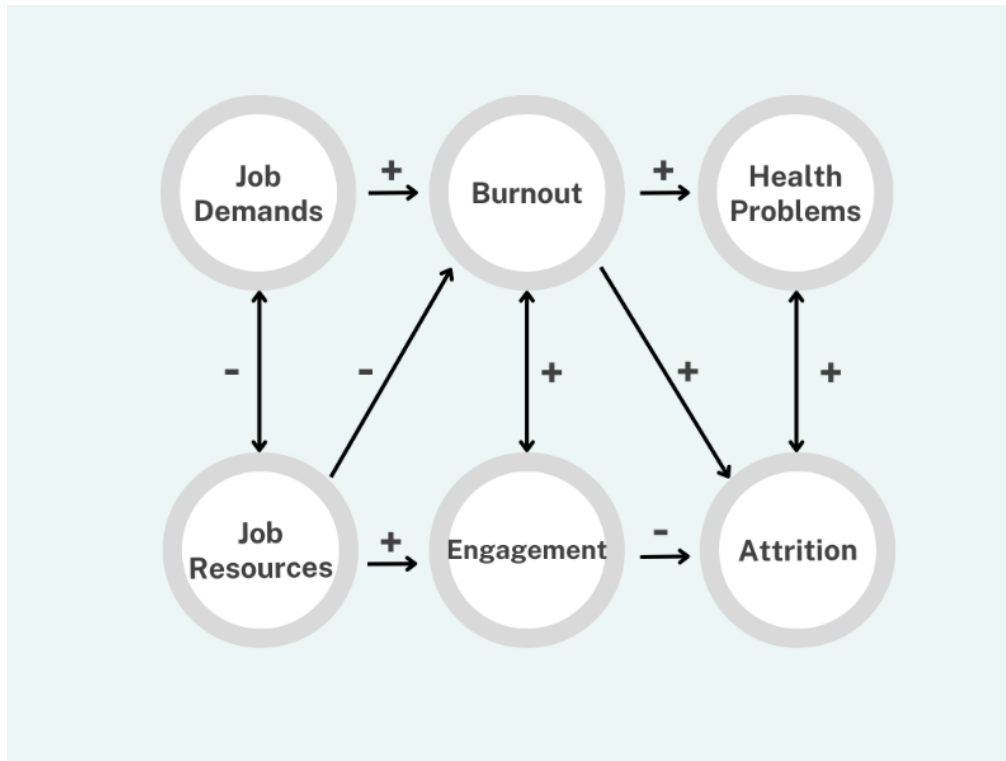
Demerouti et al. (2001) explained job resources referred to organizational, social, psychological, or physical features of a job that allowed the achievement of work goals, reduced job demands, and stimulated personal growth and development. Examples of job resources included autonomy, performance feedback, social support, participation in decision making, task significance, task variety, and supervisor support (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti et al., 2001; Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). An abundance of job resources quelled the negative impact of job demands on burnout levels (Demerouti et al., 2001). Informed leadership had the potential to reduce job demands and increase job resources through tailor-made interventions that may decrease the burnout risk while increasing work engagement and productivity (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). As displayed in Figure 2, Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) reached several conclusions:

- Increased job demands led to increased burnout.
- Increased burnout led to increased health problems and/or attrition.
- Decreased engagement led to increased burnout.
- Increased job resources led to decreased burnout.

- Increased job resources led to increased engagement.
- Increased engagement led to decreased burnout.
- Increased engagement led to less attrition intention.

Figure 2

Impact of Job Demands and Job Resources



Note. This figure was adapted from “Job Demands, Job Resources, and Their Relationship with Burnout and Engagement: A Multi-Sample Study,” by W. B. Schaufeli and A. B. Bakker, 2004, *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 25(3), pp.293-315. Copyright 2004 by John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

The Human Relations Theory of Management. The HRTM was borne out of the Hawthorne experiments, which were empirical studies conducted by Elton Mayo and a group of Harvard researchers (Omodan et al., 2020; Saxena, 2021). These researchers discovered that in addition to being economic beings, employees also had social and psychological needs (Saxena,

2021). This behavioral approach placed the emphasis on the followers and indicated that when leaders understood their followers' needs and led accordingly, organizational success would occur (Saxena, 2021). Mayo (1933) recognized followers as individuals with unique attitudes, beliefs, and skills, asserting that things other than money motivated people. Mayo stressed that "whole-hearted collaboration" between leaders and followers was desperately needed. Other forms of motivation that led to an increase in morale and productivity were employee inclusion, employee recognition, teamwork encouragement, and collaborations (Omodon et al., 2020). The HRTM set forth the importance of the relationship between leaders and followers noting leaders were responsible for creating a positive work environment with clearly identified goals, properly used incentives, timely and participative decisions, leader-follower collaboration, and growth-oriented work (Mayo, 1933; Omodon et al., 2020; Saxena, 2021). Mayo concluded his treatise on human problems of an industrial civilization by noting too few leaders understood many of the workforce problems related to human social needs rather than economic needs. He called for the universities of the world to begin to consider identifying and training new leadership using this paradigm.

Later, transformational leadership theory would evolve and include several components of the HRTM (Burns, 1979). One expression of transformational leadership is Kouzes and Posner's (2023) Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership. This framework breaks down transformational leadership into five practices emphasizing the leader-follower relationship; these practices addressed the social and psychological needs followers often have in the workplace environment (Kouzes & Posner, 2023). Kouzes and Posner's framework focused on the behavior of leadership, not leadership's intentions or characteristics. This research will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

Domain Related Burnout. In 2005, Kristensen et al. presented a new tool for assessing burnout, the CBI. This instrument consisted of three subscales that measured burnout in different domains: personal burnout, work-related burnout, and client-related burnout. Edwards et al. (1998) had previously espoused the person-environment fit approach to stress which recognized stress occurred from a misfit between a person and their environment. Oftentimes, this was a work environment. Edwards et al. noted that as a process theory, the person-environment fit theory was applicable to different life domains. Because stress is a precursor to burnout, it stands to reason that burnout could also be evidenced within different life domains, and throughout the literature, other researchers supported this idea (Bianchi et al., 2014; Pines & Keinan, 2005; Shirom, 2005). In Shirom's (2005) reflections on the study of burnout, he recognized burnout as a chronic, global phenomenon characterized by low physical and low emotional energy. In agreement with Kristensen and her colleagues, Shirom postulated burnout was a multicontextual syndrome occurring across different life domains rather than a multidimensional theory. Shirom indicated these domains were relatively independent of each other, citing social cognitive theory as justification, and he noted the CBI was an appropriate instrument for measuring burnout within these separate domains.

Previously, Maslach's multidimensional burnout theory and the related MBI dominated the field by defining and assessing burnout through three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment (Maslach et al., 1997). Kristensen et al. (2005) decried the monopoly status the MBI had in burnout research, questioning its scientific validity by noting the Maslach definition of burnout and the MBI had become "two sides of the same coin: burnout is what the MBI measures, and the MBI measures what burnout is" (p. 193). Kristensen et al. argued the core of burnout was fatigue and exhaustion; these were attributable

to specific domains in a person's life and could be measured generally or in connection to specific work aspects.

Burnout in Libraries

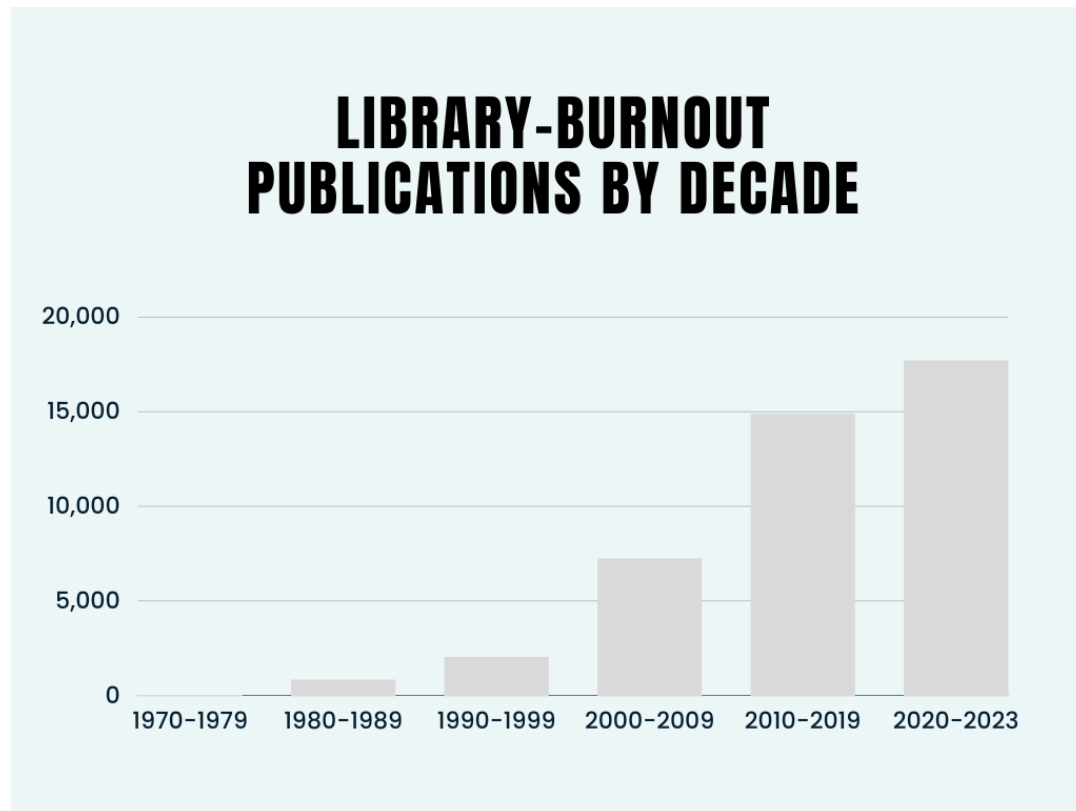
Librarianship required an emotional, physical, and mental investment from its members (Joe, 2019). Librarians had to address the growing requests for service and to meet the needs of a diverse set of patrons regardless of the library setting. Oftentimes, these patron needs were quite complex, requiring much effort despite constantly changing work environments, understaffing, shrinking budgets, substantial workloads, and little administrative support (Ashiq et al., 2021; Bartlett, 2018; Burke et al., 2009; Christian, 2015; DelGuidice, 2011; Heady et al., 2020; Jordan, 2014). Over time, constant exposure to these stressors began to take its toll on the well-being of librarians, eventually manifesting as job burnout (Maslach et al., 2001; Schaufeli et al., 2009; Smith et al., 2020).

The late 1970s saw the beginning initiation of research into occupational burnout within librarianship. The first acknowledgement in the literature that burnout was a prevalent condition experienced by librarians was Watstein's (1979) write-up, *Burnout: From a Librarian's Perspective*. This publication described burnout in libraries as an overlooked and misunderstood phenomenon. Watstein bemoaned the fact librarians had been largely ignored by programs that sought to assist those in helping professions deal with work-related burnout. A broad search through professional literature indicated burnout for librarians continued to be a challenge in libraries throughout the following decades (Holm et al., 2022). Figure 3 is a representation of this growing phenomenon and researchers' interest in addressing it. From 2020 – 2023, the number of publications had already surpassed the previous decades in the total number of publications.

After examining the search results, it was apparent public librarians, school librarians, and academic librarians were all experiencing burnout.

Figure 3

Library Burnout Publications by Decade



Note. This search was performed on October 10, 2023, using Valdosta State University’s access to GALILEO. The search terms included (burnout OR burn-out AND librar*) and results were limited to peer-reviewed journal articles.

Smith et al. (2020) conducted a survey with public librarians exploring the relationship between burnout predictors and reported their findings on stressors and coping mechanisms. A total of 57 public librarians completed the survey. When asked if the public librarians found their jobs stressful, 60.7% either strongly agreed or agreed. The follow-up question asked the public librarians if they believed stress impacted their work performance. Over 75% of the respondents

indicated stress impacted their work performance. Other researchers delving into public library research related many causes of stress leading to burnout; these included poor or toxic leadership, workloads, difficult patrons, technostress, lack of control, role ambiguity, workplace abuse, and coworkers (Birch et al., 1986; Blessinger, 2002; Ferriero & Powers, 1982; Foulger & Moten, 2020; Jordan, 2014; Kendrick, 2020; Lindén et al., 2018; Oliver, 2019; Salyers et al., 2019).

Although not as prevalent as the studies on burnout of public librarians, evidenced in the literature was also research on burnout in school librarians. In 1989, Fimian and Johnson developed the Media Specialist Stress Inventory (MSSI), an instrument to measure occupational stress in media specialists. Due to the dual role media specialists often had in school settings, the researchers suspected these professionals may be susceptible to stress and burnout. After analyzing data collected by the MSSI and the MBI, Fimian and Johnson confirmed their hypothesis; their research indicated media specialists experienced work-related stress and burnout much like teachers. The researchers concluded their new instrument, the MSSI, accurately predicted burnout levels. Other researchers discussing burnout and school librarians cited several stressors within the K-12 environment. These included funding, workload, technology, and revised standards (Al Said & Al-Rawashdeh, 2022; Craddock, 2019; Foulger & Moten, 2020; Mann & Pannell, 1990).

Burnout in Academic Librarians

Academic librarians occupied inimitable positions within librarianship as their job duties required them to be both service professionals and academicians. Because of this, academic librarians had their own on-the-job stressors that contributed to burnout (Kane, 2018). When these stressors were present over an extended period of time with little to no job resources

available to address them, burnout occurred (Behrend, 2022). Previously, within the professional literature, these stressors and their impact on academic librarians had garnered a minimal amount of attention for years, but in the 21st century the literature saw an extreme uptick in publications focused on stressors and burnout within academic librarianship (Holm et al., 2022).

Wood et al. (2020) surveyed 1,628 United States academic librarians using the work-related burnout subscale of the CBI. Wood et al.'s results indicated 70% of the respondents surveyed were sometimes, often, or always burned out. Their total work-related burnout score (TWRBS) was 49.6 out of 100, indicating an elevated level of burnout. Upon comparison with other professions, academic librarians' TWRBSs were highest. Previously, Kristensen et al. (2005) analyzed the validity and reliability of the CBI using data from a five-year study of employees working in the human service sector. Included were the TWRBSs for fifteen professions. The average TWRBS was 33.0, which included midwives scoring the highest (43.5) and home helpers scoring the lowest (26.4) (Kristensen et al., 2005, p. 201).

Stressors and Burnout in Academic Libraries. Many stressors found in academic library environments were consistent, reoccurring throughout professional literature. However, with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, new stressors presented (Edú-Valsania et al., 2022; Salvesen & Berg, 2021). Oftentimes, unchecked stress was a precursor to developing full blown burnout syndrome (Maslach et al., 2001; Schaufeli et al., 2009; Smith et al., 2020). The following were stressors commonly discussed in the literature as related to academic librarians and burnout: unpreparedness, technostress, library patrons, role stress, faculty status, parenthood, COVID-19 pandemic. More is discussed in the subsequent subsections.

Unpreparedness. Affleck (1996) surveyed 142 bibliographic librarians using the MBI. The MBI measured three dimensions of burnout: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and lack of personal accomplishment. The findings indicated 8.5% of the respondents scored in the high range of burnout for all three dimensions, 14.8% scored high in two dimensions, and 52.8% scored high in at least one dimension. When questioned, most of the respondents (74.3%) indicated their library degree had not adequately prepared them for a teaching role. Several researchers discussed similar findings concerning librarians being unprepared for their job duties (Julien et al., 2022; Lundstrom et al., 2021; Petek, 2018).

Technostress. In 2005, Ennis (2005) elaborated on technostress as a potential problem for academic librarianship. Using a Likert-type instrument, Ennis measured academic librarians' perceptions of the impact that recent technologies were having on reference librarians in 97 U.S. academic research libraries. Responses from 158 individuals in 37 libraries indicated the rapid pace of changes in technology and the technological savvy expected of librarians caused respondents to experience technostress. Ennis also noted the changing roles of academic librarians as they related to technology. Murgu (2021) interviewed academic librarians working in digital scholarship pertaining to their experiences with technostress. Three major themes developed as causes of technostress: expectations management, unclear job assignments, and the overwhelming variation in digital scholarship. The respondents expressed that technostress encouraged impostor phenomenon and caused them to feel insecure professionally. Other researchers also considered technostress a stressor in the academic library (Ahmad & Amin, 2012; Imam et al., 2022; Petek, 2018).

Library Patrons. Using a semi-structured interview as a data collection technique, Petek (2018) interviewed reference library staff from 10 academic libraries and found 100% of those

interviewed indicated difficult patrons as a source of work-related stress. Farler and Broady-Preston's (2012) case study used questionnaires and a series of semi-structured interviews to assess workplace stress in a college library. The respondents cited student behavior and balancing the needs of different user groups as stressors. The researchers also indicated several of the respondents reported stress accompanied with feelings of inadequacy due to their inability to meet customer needs. The parallels between these findings and Maslach's characterization of burnout, especially a negative self-image, were highlighted. Other studies cited library patrons as a cause of stress and burnout for academic librarians (Johnson & Page, 2022; Simmonds & Ingold, 2002).

Role Stress. The role of the academic librarian has changed drastically within the last few decades; the continued advancement of technology and changes in instructional needs were catalysts for this transformation (Shupe & Pung, 2011). This role stress has come with a price; role ambiguity, role overload, and role conflict all exacerbated burnout among academic librarians (Shupe & Pung, 2011). Shupe et al. (2015) surveyed 282 academic librarians. Using the OLBI, they discovered a mean on the composite scale for librarians ($M = 2.2$). This score was comparable to that of Norwegian physicians ($M = 1.9$), bank call center workers ($M = 2.4$), healthcare workers ($M = 2.4$), white-collar workers ($M = 2.2$), and occupational therapists ($M = 2.3$) (Shupe et al., 2015, p. 267). Shupe et al. identified role ambiguity and role overload as two pronounced sources of stress for burnout in academic librarians.

Role ambiguity occurred when librarians were unclear about their job responsibilities (Shupe & Pung, 2011). Other researchers also noted that role ambiguity in the academic librarian was a stressor (Adebayo et al., 2018; Affleck, 1996; Faulkner, 2015; Hogarth, 2017; Kantor, 2022; Oud, 2008). Faulkner (2015) relayed that as a new academic librarian, she floundered

while struggling to understand what her new role in the library constituted. This led to her developing impostor phenomenon, which has been linked to stress, low self-confidence, and job burnout (Barr-Walker et al., 2019; Clark et al., 2014). Role ambiguity tended to be prevalent in new hires, with many academic librarians, whether new to the profession or new to a position, requiring formalized training and support (Bonn et al., 2020; Corbin, 2020; Shupe et al., 2015). Faulkner confirmed this stating her experience was not isolated; she had heard many other academic librarians echo the same concerns about role ambiguity.

Role overload involved an employee striving to meet a job's requirement without the necessary skills or resources; with too many responsibilities and demands placed upon them, the result is the employee being overworked (Bartlett, 2018; Shupe & Pung, 2011). After interviewing 221 academic librarians, Adebayo et al. (2018) uncovered 81% of their respondents were unable to effectively complete their work due to limited resources. In Heady et al.'s (2020) study examining academic librarian turnover, role overload was an area where many respondents ($n = 24$) were most dissatisfied. Role overload has been cited throughout literature many times as a source of stress and burnout in academic librarians (Adebayo et al., 2018; Badia, 2017; Farler & Broady-Preston, 2012; Johnson & Page, 2022; Kendrick, 2017; Kendrick & Damasco, 2019; Kennedy & Garewal, 2020; Petek, 2018; Townsend & Bugg, 2020).

Less prevalent in the reviewed literature was the discussion of role conflict as a stressor leading to burnout. Shupe and Pung (2011) explained role conflict resulted when job requirements conflicted with other responsibilities outside of work, or when conflicting demands arose within their job position. Hogarth (2017) named role conflict as an antecedent of burnout stating it resulted when leadership did not clearly communicate their expectations to followers because followers needed predictability in their workplaces.

Faculty Status. Researchers have found a connection between burnout and tenure-track faculty librarians (Cameron et al., 2021; Kane, 2018; Kantor, 2022; Stine, 2022). Academic librarians who have tenure or who are pursuing tenure may be more prone to burnout due to the service demands and research expectations placed upon them. In addition to everyday librarian duties, many post-secondary institutions required tenured librarians to also participate in professional service, contribute to academic governance, and publish in scholarly journals, all while meeting rank and promotion requirements (Cameron et al., 2021). Using two surveys, The Institutional Supports and Professional Confidence Survey and the Job Stress Survey, Cameron et al. (2021) discovered tenure-track librarians scored in the 65th percentile for job stress of professional positions. Further results indicated also contributing to this high level of occupational stress were lack of organizational support and ambiguity concerning the tenure process.

Parenthood. Holt et al. (2022) designed a mixed methods survey instrument for academic librarians who were parents. They used the CBI definitions of burnout to define parental and academic burnout. The survey results revealed almost 90% of the respondents ($n = 747$) had experienced some form of burnout while employed in an academic library, with tenure-track librarians reporting a higher level of burnout than their counterparts. Other researchers had also noted the connection between burnout, work-life balance, and parenthood (Townsend & Bugg, 2020; Weeks et al., 2022). Holt et al. reported several systemic issues that contributed to burnout among academic librarians; these included the lack of flexible scheduling, lack of paid time off, and lack of parental leave. The data for this study were collected during the COVID-19 pandemic and may have accounted for a higher level of burnout reported by the respondents.

COVID-19 Pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated burnout (Bynoe & Coates, 2022; Lievens, 2021; Roth et al. 2023; Salvesen & Berg, 2021). New challenges and stressors presented themselves within the academic library during this tough time of sudden transition, resulting in academic librarians feeling apprehensive, overwhelmed, scared, and frustrated (Garner & Logue, 2020; Salvesen & Berg, 2021). A response to the pandemic impacted academic library services, working conditions, and library budgets (Kennedy & Garewal, 2020). Hiring freezes and reduction in staffing took place, with some institutions reporting up to an 80% reduction in full-time staff (Breland et al., 2023; Garner & Logue, 2020). Leadership transitions occurred and in many of these cases new leadership was hired via virtual interviews, starting their roles in new positions without entering the physical location for many months (Garczynski et al., 2022; Garner & Logue, 2020; Holt et al., 2022).

A blurring of boundary lines between work and home, as well as juggling the responsibilities of parenting while remote working, were sources of increased stress in academic librarians during the pandemic (Bynoe & Coates, 2022; Griggs-Taylor & Lee, 2022). For many working mothers, although a return to normal was instituted complete with their children returning to school, the mothers continued to be stressed (Miller, 2022; Pope-Ruark, 2022). Gruber et al. (2020) questioned if academia would ever have a complete return to normal, discussing how overwhelming a return to campus was especially for those who were dealing with childcare issues and unrelenting or accelerated work expectations from colleagues. Also upset by the pandemic was work-life balance as librarians struggled to work, educate their children, and perform normal household duties (Holt et al., 2022).

Bynoe and Coates (2022) discussed the impact the COVID-19 pandemic had on Black, female, academic librarians, claiming their physical and mental well-being were at a greater risk.

These researchers argued the pandemic intensified burnout for Black women librarians due to their lived experience with intersectionality. Also stated was the pandemic exacerbated gender and race disparities. Other researchers noted this as well (Hodge & Williams, 2021; Snowden & Snowden, 2021). Bynoe and Coates called for the academic library forum to continue the discussion concerning the increase of diversity within the academic library, to examine the stress and trauma faced by Black women librarians in the workplace, and to continue research on burnout in academic librarians of color.

Despite all these new stressors evidencing themselves during the pandemic, the pandemic created an opportunity for librarians and leadership to evaluate what was working in their workplaces and to initiate changes that fostered future sustainability (Marquez, 2023). Fancher (2022) recognized the COVID-19 pandemic “normalized a degree of vulnerability and transparency in acknowledging challenges and difficulties” calling for library leadership to continue this extension of grace and understanding post-pandemic (p. 240). Leadership must make an increased effort to address and alleviate stressors that lead to burnout, especially considering the relationship the literature has established between poor academic librarian leadership and burnout.

Burnout and Poor Academic Librarian Leadership

Within the last decade, the correlation between poor leadership leading to low morale, dysfunctional work cultures, and burnout in academic librarians was observed and discussed (Del Rio et al., 2022; Fic & Albro, 2022; Kendrick, 2017; Kennedy & Garewal, 2020; McCormack & Cotter, 2013; Ortega, 2017). Ortega (2017) addressed toxic leadership in academic libraries. She recognized the dearth of professional literature concerning management and academic libraries. After surveying and interviewing academic librarians who had

experienced toxic leadership, Ortega concluded toxic leadership was prevalent in academic libraries and its detrimental impacts included absenteeism, high turnover, productivity decline, and decreased morale. As noted, these have also been associated with employees experiencing burnout.

Kennedy and Garewal (2020) engaged in an exploratory study that quantitatively measured academic librarian workplace morale concentrating on their supervisor's influence. The researchers uncovered several variables within a supervisor's purview that directly impacted workplace morale, including communication, transparency, and empowerment. Of their respondents, 63.5% ($n = 365$) recognized a single past incident with a supervisor continued to presently impact their morale. These respondents indicated that most of these incidents were negative in nature. Another quantitative study analyzed 327 survey responses by academic librarians concerning counterproductive workplace behaviors (CWB). Low to moderate levels of CWB were present and often contributed to burnout in academic libraries (Fic & Albro, 2022).

Del Rio et al. (2022) used a survey and semi-structured interviews to collect information from academic librarians concerning their workplace cultures. The researchers found a correlation between dysfunctional workplace cultures and burnout. They also indicated a connection between long-term burnout and an intensification of the workplace dysfunction experienced by the employee. Frequently, the interviewees underscored that toxic work environments impacted their mental health. Out of 392 respondents, 73% indicated they had considered leaving their academic librarian position due to a dysfunctional workplace culture. Some of these respondents participated in interviews concerning their perceived causes and impacts of dysfunctional work culture as they related to leadership. Several themes emerged

including ineffective leadership, poor strategic visioning, lack of feedback, and lack of transparency.

Kendrick's (2017) qualitative study used a phenomenological approach to research workplace morale amongst academic librarians. Kendrick summarized low morale "as the degree to which an employee harbors negative feelings about his or her workplace or dissatisfaction with aspects of the work or workplace" (p. 847). Kendrick recognized that burnout was a process associated with low morale. All respondents indicated poor treatment by leadership; ambivalent, absent, laissez-faire, and apathetic leaders were significant contributors to the respondents' low-morale experiences (Kendrick, 2017). Due to these experiences, many respondents developed negative feelings about their profession within academic libraries, which led them to consider abandoning their careers.

Academic Librarian Attrition

In fields other than librarianship, leadership had a direct impact on employee retention (Joseph & Carolissen, 2022; Othman, 2022; Saeed & Jun, 2021). The same can be said for the academic library. Much of the research surrounding academic librarian turnover originated in the early 2000s (Fyn et al., 2019). This interest in turnover corresponded to the 2002 Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL) Focus of the Future Taskforce identifying the retention of librarians as one of the organization's top issues (Hisle, 2002). Several of these studies indicated poor working environments, conflicts with administration, and poor morale as reasons for vacating a position (Heady et al., 2020; Kennedy & Garewal, 2020; Luzius & Ard, 2006; Markgren et al., 2007). Many studies cited poor morale, blaming it on dysfunctional working environments influenced by ineffective or poor leadership. This is notable due to the association

between low morale and burnout within academic libraries (Glusker et al., 2022; Kendrick, 2017; Weyant et al., 2021a).

Luzius and Ard (2006) distributed a survey to former academic librarians asking why they left the field. The responses received indicated administration, image, and salary influenced their decision. The highest number of respondents (44.4%) cited an unpleasant work environment as a reason for leaving a position. During follow-up interviews, several respondents elucidated, making mention that poor morale in the workplace and poor leadership contributed to the unpleasant work environment. Kendrick's (2017) phenomenological study consisted of 21 academic librarians. Through phone interviews, Kendrick asked semi-structured interview questions to collect data on the respondents' experiences with low morale. Upon asking respondents to choose from a list of low morale experience triggers, 70% indicated administrative or managerial incompetence. Respondents also conveyed their low-morale experiences within the academic library caused them to think negatively about their careers, even prompting them to consider leaving the field completely.

Moreover, Heady et al. (2020) used an online survey to examine the reasons academic librarians left one institution for another within a five-year period. The quantitative data indicated respondents were the most disgruntled with the morale in their library ($M = 3.17$, $SD = 1.01$). This was followed by library administration ($M = 3.04$, $SD = 1.15$) and library culture ($M = 2.93$, $SD = 1.02$). The authors ascertained poor management contributed to an unsupportive organizational culture; this caused low morale which prompted academic librarians to leave their current positions (Heady et al., 2020). Kennedy and Garewal's (2020) exploratory study uncovered a strong statistically significant negative correlation between the turnover intention of academic librarians and workplace morale ($r(557) = -.84$, $p < .001$). This indicated turnover

intention increased when work-place morale decreased, and turnover intention decreased when workplace morale increased.

Impact of Academic Librarian Attrition. While some turnover within the academic library is inevitable, efforts should be made to keep it minimal so as not to impact the library employees, the patrons served, or the affiliated institution (Emmons & Wilkinson, 2011; Mezick, 2007). Longevity in an academic librarian position is preferred to promote meaningful engagement with colleagues and students. Kennedy and Garewal (2020) discovered librarian staffing levels directly impacted workplace morale. The study respondents reporting more librarians on staff demonstrated a higher workplace morale than those who reported fewer librarians on staff. The research findings also indicated retaining present colleagues positively impacted the workplace morale of academic librarians more than gaining new ones.

Mezick (2007) discovered a statistically significant relationship between the number of professional staff in the academic library and student retention. This was especially true for doctoral granting institutions ($r^2 = 0.287$) whose coefficient of determination indicated a moderate relationship. Using a sample of 99 U.S. academic libraries from the Association of Research Libraries (ARL), Emmons and Wilkinson (2011) noted a relationship between library professional staffing, student retention, and graduation. A 10% increase in the ratio of professional library staff predicted an increase in retention (.72) and an increase in graduation (1.55) (Emmons & Wilkinson, 2011). Conversely, student persistence numbers dropped dramatically when the number of library professional staff dropped (Emmons & Wilkinson, 2011).

Addressing Burnout in Academic Libraries

Academic libraries are part of large organizational structures, typically college or university systems. Oftentimes, these bureaucratic structures were ineffective at addressing burnout due to their being politicized, layered, and strategic (Miles & Markgren, 2022). Recently, there has been a push in the literature for organizations and institutions to begin focusing on burnout within the academic library (Behrend, 2022; Del Rio et al., 2022; Hogarth, 2017; Holm et al., 2022; Townsend & Bugg, 2020; Weyant et al., 2021a; Weyant et al., 2021b). Academic library leadership was paramount in this endeavor. Suggestions for reducing stress, improving morale, and alleviating burnout were present. The importance of flexibility and open communication was prominent along with other important recommendations.

Behrend (2022) sought to distinguish clinical depression from burnout due to their similarities. She relayed the fear of stigma related to mental illness may hinder those suffering in academia from disclosing burnout to colleagues or attempting to address the syndrome. Behrend recognized burnout was preventable at an organizational level. To do this, she suggested leaders work with their librarians to clarify work duties, reduce workloads, and reorganize tasks to combat burnout. Also recommended was having open communication, setting realistic and meaningful goals, and providing adequate workspace for librarians to occupy.

Townsend and Bugg (2020) conducted an exploratory study examining the perception of work-life balance with 329 academic librarians. They found several things that impeded work-life balance, including heavy workloads. Suggestions given to remedy this challenge included flexibility in scheduling, telecommuting options, and supportive human resources policies. Townsend and Bugg highlighted that supporting a greater work-life balance for academic

librarians contributed to higher workplace satisfaction, which in turn led to improved retention rates.

Griggs-Taylor and Lee won the 2022 Georgia Library Association Academic Library Division academic paper competition with their entry on researching burnout within academic librarians. In their paper, Griggs-Taylor and Lee (2022) reflected upon their firsthand experiences with work-related burnout and their managerial responsibilities as they related to burnout in those they supervised. They recognized a need for leadership to promote a culture of healthy work-life balances by removing institutional barriers that may hinder it. Leadership suggestions included modeling effective behaviors, encouraging colleagues to take their earned leave, improving communication plans, refining job descriptions, and creating and encouraging a culture of flexibility.

Weyant et al. (2021a, 2021b) conducted a systematic review covering the contributors of low morale in libraries and how to improve it. There were 65 articles chosen for review. Noting the leader-follower relationship had both positive and negative impacts on morale, Weyant et al. (2021a) insisted this relationship was crucial to overall employee morale. Prior research indicated even a single negative occurrence with a supervisor can indefinitely impact an employee's morale (Kennedy & Garewal, 2020). Weyant et al. (2021a, 2021b) suggested those in supervisory positions must make good hiring choices, clearly and consistently communicate, and provide supportive work environments striving for unbiased practices to curb low morale in their institutions and organizations.

The literature supported the notion that leadership played an important role in addressing burnout in the workplace (Holm et al., 2022; McCormack & Cotter, 2013). Globally, there were many types of leadership styles found within academic libraries; however, all were not

considered equally suited for the academic environment (Akparobore & Omosekejimi, 2020; Chukwusa, 2018; Izzat Ullah Sheikh & Anwar, 2022; Okpokwasili & Kalu, 2021; Weiner, 2003). Research has shown transformational leadership and today's library environment were a good fit (Martin, 2016; Miles & Markgren, 2022; Phillips, 2014).

Transformational Leadership

Leadership in any organization is crucial to success. Followers rely on excellent role models, expecting their leaders to provide them with vision, inspiration, guidance, motivation, and encouragement (Caza et al., 2021; Kouzes & Posner, 2023). In his seminal work, *Leadership*, Burns (1979) defined leadership as “leaders inducing followers to act for certain goals that represent the values and the motivations – the wants and needs, the aspirations and expectations – of both leaders and followers” (p. 19). He identified two basic types of leadership, noting the differences between the more traditional transactional leadership and the newer transformational leadership approach. Transactional leadership focused on transactions; leaders gave followers something they wanted so that the followers would give leaders what they wanted, a bartering for goods and rights (Kuhnert & Lewis, 1987). Burns conveyed that although much of leadership was transactional, the complex nature of transformational leadership was far more powerful. Bass and Riggio (2006) explained transformational leadership was an expansion of transactional leadership, raising leadership to the next level. Transformational leadership formed and nurtured relationships, motivating followers. Burns indicated one cannot separate leadership from the followers' needs and goals; the two being inextricably linked. Burns recognized through transformational leadership, followers' existing needs were recognized, and future aspirations mobilized. Thus, transformational leadership allowed leaders and followers to engage, each raising the other towards increased levels of morality and motivation (Burns, 1979).

Bass and Riggio asserted that transformational leadership considered the collective goals of followers as more important than a leader's personal goals, which made it a universal way of leading that could potentially transcend cultures and contexts.

Impact on Burnout

Transformational leadership was the most studied and the most popular style of leadership found throughout the literature (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Kelly & Hearld, 2020; Sun et al., 2017; Wilkinson et al., 2018). Many contemporary studies from around the world and within many types of organizations demonstrated that employees whose leadership practiced transformational leadership had higher morale, were more effective in their positions, and had lower attrition rates (Baig et al., 2021; Budur & Demir, 2022; Dula & Tang, 2021; Valldeneu et al., 2021; Yang & Chen, 2022; Yuwono et al., 2022). Transformational leadership also reduced burnout in employees (Chen et al., 2022; Kelly & Hearld, 2020; Tian & Guo, 2022; Tsang et al., 2022).

Miles and Markgren (2022) conducted an online survey of academic librarians who had experienced or witnessed burnout in the academic library. These researchers assumed transformational leadership practices focusing on the increase of engagement and empowerment of librarians would lessen burnout's impact. Seeking mostly qualitative data, they received 142 complete responses. From these, the researchers chose five subjects for individual, in-depth interviews. Burnout was found to plague librarians at all levels and in varied positions. The researchers' findings confirmed that academic library leaders exhibiting traits associated with transformational leadership helped alleviate burnout in the workplace. These leaders were described as present, engaged, fair, transparent, empowering, and collaborative. Also noted, was that these leaders modeled ethical behavior that motivated and inspired their followers,

communicating regularly and clearly expressing their expectations and goals. Other researchers throughout the library-related publications agreed (Del Rio et al., 2022; Fancher, 2022; Garczynski et al., 2022; Nardine, 2019).

Within the literature, transformational leadership focused on change and the development of new leaders. This was noteworthy as the literature had previously demonstrated the vital role leadership plays in addressing and alleviating burnout. Martin (2016) extolled the importance of transformational leadership within the academic library. In an exploratory study, he used the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) to measure the rates of transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership in academic libraries. A total of 465 academic librarians from 4-year institutions responded. On a scale of 0 to 4, respondents rated their library leadership as more transformational (2.05) than transactional (1.65), but the mean scores for both were extremely low. Martin expressed concern over these low scores realizing they may lead to low morale. As previously noted, low morale often accompanied or was a precursor to burnout. Recognizing that transformational leadership improved organizational culture by supporting change, developing new leaders, and inspiring academic librarians, Martin expounded the need to support and encourage transformational leadership within the academic library. Kouzes and Posner's (2023) framework, *The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership*, included the transformational leadership traits associated with mitigating burnout within the academic library.

Kouzes and Posner

In 1983, Kouzes and Posner embarked on a journey to discover what constituted exemplary leadership; this quest started when the two researchers began to question what leaders did when they perceived themselves to be at their personal best (Kouzes & Posner, 2023). For their research project, Kouzes and Posner examined personal-best leadership experiences

collected through a questionnaire. The 12-page *Personal-Best Leadership Experience* questionnaire consisted of 38 open-ended questions and took approximately 2 hours to complete. After analyzing over 550 surveys containing personal-best stories, two themes emerged. Everyone had a personal-best leadership story, and the behaviors described in these stories were similar and universal, involving some sort of challenge. Kouzes and Posner continued gathering leadership data from surveys, in-depth interviews, and case studies; they noticed certain practices occurred regularly. Kouzes and Posner used this qualitative research collected from a diverse pool of men and women from various organizations to inform them as they created *The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership*, a behavioral framework of exemplary leadership. Later followed the LPI, a tool for assessing leadership. The LPI has now provided the information for a database that holds leadership information on more than 4.6 million people from over 100 different countries (Kouzes & Posner, 2023).

An international bestseller, *The Leadership Challenge*, defined, discussed, and provided case examples for *The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership* (Kouzes & Posner, 2023). Also included in this title was empirical evidence corroborating the effectiveness of each of these five practices. With the recent publication of the seventh edition in 2023, *The Leadership Challenge* continued its primary purpose to assist leaders as they developed their ability to lead their followers to greatness. *The Leadership Challenge* has an accompanying website that includes an abstract archive listing executive summaries of the different institutions employing the LPI to assess the effectiveness of leadership. When searched, there were 5 unique search results concerning librarians (The Leadership Challenge, n.d.). However, none of these assessed leadership in an academic library, nor was burnout addressed in any of the studies returned in the search results.

The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership. Kouzes and Posner's (2023) title, *The Leadership Challenge*, is an evidence-based field guide for leaders; it breaks down good leadership into five practices that should be incorporated into everyday actions of leaders. Upon awareness of the five practices, leadership could purposefully implement them into their daily routines by considering the practical guidance in Kouzes & Posner's book. In essence, leadership could be learned and then practiced. The five practices were not necessarily a leadership theory; rather, they provided "an operating system for what it meant to be practicing leadership and making a difference" (Kouzes & Posner, 2021, p. 16).

Researchers have used these practices to evaluate leadership within many diverse types of institutions including non-profits, healthcare, education, government, public sectors, and religious industries (Burkman et al, 2019; Caza & Posner, 2019; Fatma & Terzioglu, 2022; Hage & Posner, 2015; *The Leadership Challenge*, n.d.). The five practices included Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart (Kouzes & Posner, 2023). Evidenced within the library professional literature were organizations that included some or all of Kouzes and Posner's leadership practices in their professional training offerings; two of these were The Sunshine State Library Leadership Institute and The Rochester Regional Library Council (Besara, 2015; Jadlos, 2015).

Kouzes and Posner's universal behavioral practices may be well suited to academic librarian leadership (Caza et al., 2021; Martin, 2016; Miles & Markgren, 2022). Research demonstrated academic librarians positively responded to leadership who possessed certain traits. The recognition of library leaders as successful or unsuccessful was based upon the support and actions received from their followership. Martin (2018) conducted a qualitative inquiry seeking to gather information from librarians concerning leadership traits future library

leaders must possess to positively impact their followers. After using constant comparative analysis on 318 academic librarians' responses, six leadership themes emerged: role model, visionary, communicator, people first, change agent, and experienced librarian. Martin's (2018) discovered traits fit nicely within Kouzes and Posner's five practices of exemplary leadership (see Table 1).

Table 1

Comparison of Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership with Martin's Traits

Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership (Kouzes & Posner, 2023)	Traits that Future Library Leadership Must Possess (Martin, 2018)
Model the Way Inspire a Shared Vision Challenge the Process Enable Others to Act Encourage the Heart	Role Model Visionary/Communicator Change Agent/Communicator People First/Communicator People First/Communicator

Note. This is a tabular representation of leadership practices and traits posed by Kouzes and Posner, 2023 and Martin, 2018, respectively.

Model the Way. For a leader to model the way, they must clarify values and set an example (Kouzes & Posner, 2023). This practice mirrored the idealized influence component of transformational leadership where leaders were considered role models worthy of emulation (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Throughout the literature, values were considered an essential component of efficacious leadership and positive organizational culture and have been associated with happiness at work, trust, work-family enrichment, job performance, job satisfaction, turnover, and retention rates (Cazier et al., 2007; Jeong et al., 2022; Lages et al., 2020; Martin, 2020; Presbitero et al., 2016; Schein & Schein, 2016; Sublett et al., 2021; Watrous et al., 2006). Leaders that effectively expressed their end values united followers and changed their goals and

beliefs, resulting in high performance levels (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1979). Kouzes and Posner (2021, 2023) recognized that values impacted every aspect of a leader's professional life and were empowering when used as guides for decision-making, goal setting, and making judgements. Effective organizational leaders understood and were able to articulate their personal values as well as their team's shared values, both of which had the potential to inspire commitment (Kouzes & Posner, 2021). Values influenced important work attitudes (commitment, motivation, ethics, and efficacy) and were instrumental in creating and sustaining a positive, effective organizational work environment (Posner, 2016). Posner used a cross-sectional sample of 711 managers from across the United States to examine personal values congruence and organizational values clarity. He found significant relationships between these two factors and commitment, satisfaction, and motivation in followership. Kiel's (2015) landmark return on character (ROC) study included full data sets on 84 leaders. Kiel concluded that leaders who clearly communicated their values to their followers produced nearly five times more return on assets for their organizations than leaders who did not.

Leaders engaged in modeling the way provided concrete examples of the behaviors deemed important and expected in an organization (Hogarth, 2017). While followers often considered what their leaders said, a leader's actions were more impactful (Kouzes & Posner, 2021). Leaders who consistently provided clear demonstrations of expected behaviors for their followers demonstrated the importance of acceptable behavior in the workplace which had the potential to provide greater role clarity and to increase job satisfaction (Martin, 2018; Organ, et al. 2006). This authentic leadership incorporated personal values into everyday leadership. It demonstrated that exemplary leadership comes from within, thus inspiring trust in their followers. Baldoni (2009) insisted that consistently setting the correct example was the key to

getting followers to believe in who you are and what you stand for as a leader. Kouzes and Posner (2021) noted leaders who frequently engaged in this practice were extremely effective and other researchers concurred, noting trust as an important outcome.

Trust between leaders, followers, and organizations was deemed essential in working relationships (Martin, 2018). Covey (2013) recognized trust as “the highest form of human motivation” (p. 187). Leaders earned the trust of their followers by exhibiting integrity and fairness. Bennis et al. (2008) noted trust was the “outcome of all a leader’s accumulated actions and behaviors” (p. 62). Simons et al.’s (2015) meta-analysis on behavioral integrity found a leader’s words and actions had a powerful impact on their followers’ trust ($\beta = 0.72, p < 0.01$) and a direct relation with their followers’ performance ($\beta = 0.27, p < 0.01$). Kouzes and Posner (2023) discovered 86% of followers who perceived their leadership as very frequently or almost always following through on their promises and commitments strongly agreed they trusted their organizational management with almost a one-to-one correspondence. The LPI data further demonstrated peers (91%) deemed a leader effective if they very frequently or almost always kept their promises and commitments (Kouzes & Posner, 2021). Followers who trusted their leaders were better organizational citizens, demonstrating loyalty to their organization, conscientious workplace behavior, and fair treatment of colleagues (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Organ, 1988). Contrastingly, untrustworthy leaders impacted employees negatively. Role ambiguity, one of the stressors contributing to burnout in academic librarians, increased when followers mistrusted their leadership (Organ et al., 2006). Other researchers noted that without a culture of trust in the workplace, employees suffered more from stress, burnout, low productivity, poor engagement, and absenteeism (Lewis, 2022; Zak, 2017).

Inspire a Shared Vision. For a leader to inspire a shared vision, they must envision the future and then enlist others (Kouzes & Posner, 2023). This practice was like Bass and Riggio's (2006) transformational leader component, inspirational motivation. Organizations needed a vision, "an ideal and unique image of the future for the common good" (Kouzes & Posner, 2023, p. 89). Followers required forward thinking from their leadership. Kouzes and Posner (2009) reported 72% of followers want forward-looking leadership; this increased to 88% for respondents in higher level positions. Leadership that inspired a vision recognized exciting possibilities for their teams, encouraged their team to contribute to the vision development process, and then promoted this vision clearly to inspire buy-in from their followers (Berson et al., 2016; Kouzes & Posner, 2021). In this way, forward thinking leaders did not simply impose their personal vision on their followers, rather they inspired a shared vision. These shared visions sustained commitment over time, moving an organization towards progress, change, and improvement (Kouzes & Posner, 2023; Martin, 2018). Leadership that frequently demonstrated how common visions supported employees in obtaining their long-term interests were rated five times more effective than their counterparts who seldom engaged in this behavior (Kouzes & Posner, 2023).

Throughout the leadership literature, leaders that clearly communicated a persuasive vision to their followers were universally recognized as effectual (Carton et al., 2014; Du & Bao, 2023; Greer et al., 2012; Hogarth, 2017; Li et al., 2023; Sargolzaei & Keikha, 2020; Yulius, 2022). Shared visions were vital for important organizational outcomes (Berson et al., 2016; Martin, 2020; Organ et al., 2006). Leadership that inspired shared visions instilled purpose in their followers, caused followers to unite behind common organizational goals, enhanced coordination, facilitated achievement, increased performance quality, promoted creativity,

facilitated voice behavior, and validated experiences (Berson et al., 2016; Carton et al., 2014; Du & Bao, 2023; Li et al., 2023). Typically, shared visions eventually involved organizational change. Therefore, a leader that inspired a shared vision also challenged processes and successfully managed change (Kouzes & Posner, 2023).

Challenge the Process. Leadership that challenged the process were in a continual state of challenging the status quo, seeking innovative ways to improve processes. This trait contained elements of the transformational leadership component, intellectual stimulation, where leadership encouraged creativity through questioning assumptions and reframing problems (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Bolman & Deal, 2021). Interestingly, Kouzes and Posner (2021) noted some form of this behavior was evident in every single respondent's answer. This practice allowed leadership and their followership to grow and develop even when failures occurred. Experience was viewed as a valuable instructor. Exemplary leadership capitalized on victories and losses, moving forward with a better understanding of the situation. In this way, leadership was linked to the process of innovation. Kouzes and Posner (2023) recorded a positive correlation between followers' levels of commitment, motivation, and productivity and the frequency with which they observed their own leaders challenging themselves. Other researchers have highlighted the benefits of having innovative leadership in the workplace. Improved product quality, creative workplace behavior, acceptance of modern technologies, and effective leadership were all products of leadership that practiced innovation in diverse types of organizations (Comtet & Johannessen, 2021; Kemer & Öztürk, 2021; Marianti et al., 2023; Viktora, 2022).

Organizational change was inevitable as it necessitated organizational growth. Leadership that challenged the process were essentially change agents, open to diverse ideas and proactively seeking new opportunities that addressed the constant shift in organizational environments

(Kouzes & Posner, 2023). Other leadership experts have discussed the reality of change within organizations, reiterating the importance of an effective leader during times of transition (Bolman & Deal, 2021; Fullan, 2020; Kotter, 2012). Leaders that challenged the process seized initiatives and exercised oversight. This had a direct impact on how followers perceived their leaders. Kouzes and Posner (2023) found the effectiveness ratings for leaders increased when their direct reports observed them using innovative processes to solve problems and improve their organizations.

Finally, individuals in leadership who challenged the process were risk takers. Not only did they engage in risk taking behaviors, but they encouraged their followers to do the same, recognizing both successes and failures were both powerful instructors. Kouzes and Posner (2023) recorded the most effective leaders were the ones who queried what could be learned from failures rather than assigning blame. Other researchers found evidence of correlations between risk-taking and employee empowerment, employee commitment, organizational change, creativity, and innovation (García-Granero et al., 2015; Jung et al., 2020; Shen et al., 2018). After surveying 40 male college students, Singh et al. (2022) reported a positive correlation between risk-taking and leadership effectiveness, general intelligence, and emotional intelligence, thus making risk taking an essential criterion for effective leadership.

Enable Others to Act. Leadership that enabled others to act built relationships with their followers, recognizing it took a team to make extraordinary things happen within an organization. Collaboration amongst the team was fostered by creating a climate of trust and then through the facilitation of these work relationships to uncover what the team needed to perform well. This practice paralleled the transformational leadership trait, individualized consideration, where leadership acted as a coach or mentor, providing support for their team (Bass & Riggio,

2006). This allowed organizations to achieve and sustain high performance. Kouzes and Posner's (2023) empirical research showed leadership that spent time investing in cooperative relationships were viewed by their reports as the most effective. Other researchers concurred; leadership that promoted collaboration was shown to improve the quality of learning, strengthen cooperation, enrich communication, increase job satisfaction, enhance problem-solving, and promote mutual understanding (Abidin & Alias, 2022; Aryani & Haryadi, 2023; Navalkha et al., 2021).

Leadership that enabled others also enhanced self-determination and developed competence along with confidence. Oftentimes this was done through coaching or mentoring. Coaching and mentoring have been discussed extensively throughout the literature. Researchers have proven leadership that participated in coaching or mentoring positively impacted their followers by personally and professionally forwarding their development. Leadership that utilized coaching was found to improve job performance, increase job satisfaction, reduce attrition, and promote organizational commitment (Hu et al., 2023; Kim et al., 2013; Rafferty et al., 2023). Leadership that participated in mentoring promoted leadership development, improved workplace learning and performance, promoted retention of employees, empowered mentees, provided emotional and psychological support, and supported setting and achieving career goals (Crisp & Alvarado-Young, 2018; Davis, 2021; Ramalho, 2014; Rehman et al., 2022).

Encourage the Heart. Leadership that encouraged the heart recognized employee contributions and created a spirit of community in the workplace by celebrating values and victories (Kouzes & Posner, 2023). In this way, they actively demonstrated to their followers they were appreciated. This practice built a positive culture in the workplace and elicited high

performance. This practice also included the transformational leadership component, individualized consideration, where leadership expressed confidence in their followership (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Encouraging the heart involved leadership expecting the best from their followership. Through word and deed, leaders showed their followers they were confident in their abilities. Kouzes and Posner (2023) found the motivation, commitment, and productivity of followers correlated significantly with the amount of effort leadership put in to expressing their confidence in them. The Pygmalion Effect, as this process has been referred to by social psychologists, influenced employee performance due to increased leadership expectations (Duan et al., 2017). The Pygmalion process has been researched throughout the years and supported in several meta-analytic studies (Avolio et al., 2009; Kierein & Gold, 2000; McNatt, 2000). This type of self-fulfilling prophecy in the workplace has increased employee green behavior, influenced employee's voice behavior, strengthened employees' personal identification with leadership, and improved job performance (Duan et al., 2017; Kierein & Gold, 2000; Mo et al., 2022).

Recognizing personal and organizational achievements, both formally and informally, was also part of a leader encouraging the heart. Kouzes and Posner (2023) were strong proponents of gratitude in the workplace, suggesting leaders should make a practice of saying "thank you" to deserving employees every day. Other researchers have noted leadership expressions of gratitude increased employee proactivity, motivation, work engagement, retention, job satisfaction, well-being, and self-development behaviors. (Chen, Yang, et al., 2023; Chen, Zhu, et al., 2023; Ritzenhöfer et al., 2019; Stocker et al., 2014).

Summary

Burnout was first defined by Freudenberger in 1974. Other researchers began studying this prevalent syndrome, further refining and changing its definition (Kristensen et al., 2005; Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Pines & Aronson, 1988; Shirom, 1989). Although originally recognized as a phenomenon exhibited in mental health professions, it was later recognized burnout occurred in other types of organizations, prompting researchers to develop different burnout measures (Demerouti & Nachreiner, 1998; Kristensen et al., 2005; Maslach et al., 1996). Burnout has proven to be costly to individuals and organizations, therefore necessitating studies into its antecedents, impact, and prevention (Han et al., 2019; Hogarth, 2017; Honkonen, 2006; Neill et al., 2022; Paine, 1984).

The literature demonstrated burnout was prevalent in librarians. In addition to the stressors that contributed to burnout within public librarians (i.e., shrinking budgets, technostress, library patrons, parenthood), academic librarians also reported a unique set of stressors that included unpreparedness, role stress, and faculty status. The recent COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated stress and burnout within academic librarianship. The relationship between burnout and poor academic library leadership was noted along with its correlation to attrition rates in academic libraries and the attempts being made to address it within academic libraries. This included a call for academic library leadership to consider and begin practicing transformational leadership (Martin, 2016).

Researchers have emphasized the importance of moral emotions and ethics in leadership, both principal elements of transformational leadership (Lindebaum et al., 2017). Kouzes and Posner's (2023) expression of transformational leadership addressed these and more. Bass and Riggio (2006) set forth four components of transformational leadership: idealized influence,

inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Kouzes and Posner's framework evidenced all four of these within the five practices. Recent studies demonstrated the significant role transformational leadership had in creating workplace culture which directly impacted burnout (Chen et al., 2022; Kelly & Hearld, 2020; Tian & Guo, 2022; Tsang et al., 2022). Transformational leadership has also been proven to address, mitigate, and prevent burnout in the academic library (Martin, 2016; Miles & Markgren, 2022).

Kouzes and Posner's five practices of exemplary leadership can be measured from an observer's perspective. Comparing burnout rates obtained from the CBI with the LPI: Observer's measurements will offer insight into which leadership practices potentially ameliorate or exacerbate burnout in academic librarians. This comparison is especially important because Kouzes and Posner asserted good leadership skills were learned and then purposefully employed in the workplace (Kouzes & Posner, 2017). The next chapter explains the methods used to examine burnout and leadership within the questions, scope, and procedures of the implemented study.

Chapter III

Methodology

This chapter provides an overview of this study's methodology. This includes information about the proposed research design, the population, the sample, the selection of participants, the instruments, and the two-phased data collection and data analyses. This mixed-methods study examined work-related burnout prevalence amongst academic librarians in the southeastern region of the United States, seeking to examine and explain its relationships (if any) with demographics, library leadership practices, and turnover intentions. Mixed methods research involves collecting, analyzing, and integrating quantitative and qualitative data, thus minimizing limitations inherent within each approach and providing a more complete understanding of research problems than a single research approach alone (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). It also allows a researcher to use many tools of data collection, not just specializing in quantitative or qualitative tools, which produces a rich, nuanced data set for study.

This study used the explanatory sequential design, an approach that requires data collection in two phases. The first involves quantitative data; the second involves qualitative data. This straightforward approach is useful for assessing relationships with quantitative data and then using the qualitative data for explaining connections behind those relationships (Creswell, 2022; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). For this study, the quantitative data was collected during Phase I through the Academic Librarian Leadership and Burnout Survey containing questions about demographics and turnover intentions, as well as questions from the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI) and the Leadership Practices Inventory: Observer (LPI:

Observer). At the end of the survey, there were two open-ended questions focusing on how leadership practices impact burnout within academic librarians. Also present was the option for respondents to volunteer to participate in the Phase II semi-structured follow-up interviews. The answers to the survey's open-ended questions and the follow-up interview responses helped explain any confounding survey responses (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

It was important to statistically assess the prevalence of measurable work-related burnout in the academic library population. Once determined, this study helped explain its relationships to demographics, leadership practices, and attrition. The findings revealed useful insights into the impact that observed academic library leadership practices have on academic librarians' work-related burnout.

Purpose of the Study

This study examined work-related burnout within academic librarians in the southeastern region of the United States. It sought to explain quantitative findings through follow-up qualitative inquiries. The multifaceted purpose of this study was to measure the prevalence of work-related burnout in academic librarians in the southeastern region of the United States; to examine the relationships (if any) work-related burnout has with demographics, perceived leadership practices, and turnover intentions; and to explain how leadership practices impact work-related burnout in the academic library.

Research Questions

This study investigated work-related burnout among academic librarians currently employed in the southeastern region of the United States. It also investigated their perceived library leadership practices. This researcher addressed the following research questions:

RQ1: Is there a relationship between the characteristics of academic librarians (sex, age, race, time in current position, and turnover intentions) in the southeastern region of the United States and the self-identification of work-related burnout as measured by the total work-related burnout subscale?

RQ2: Is there a relationship between the perception of library leadership practices of academic librarians in the southeastern region of the United States as measured by the LPI: Observer and the self-identification of work-related burnout as measured by the total work-related burnout subscale?

RQ3: What are the experiences of academic librarians in the southeastern region of the United States concerning the impact library leadership practices have on work-related burnout?

Research Design

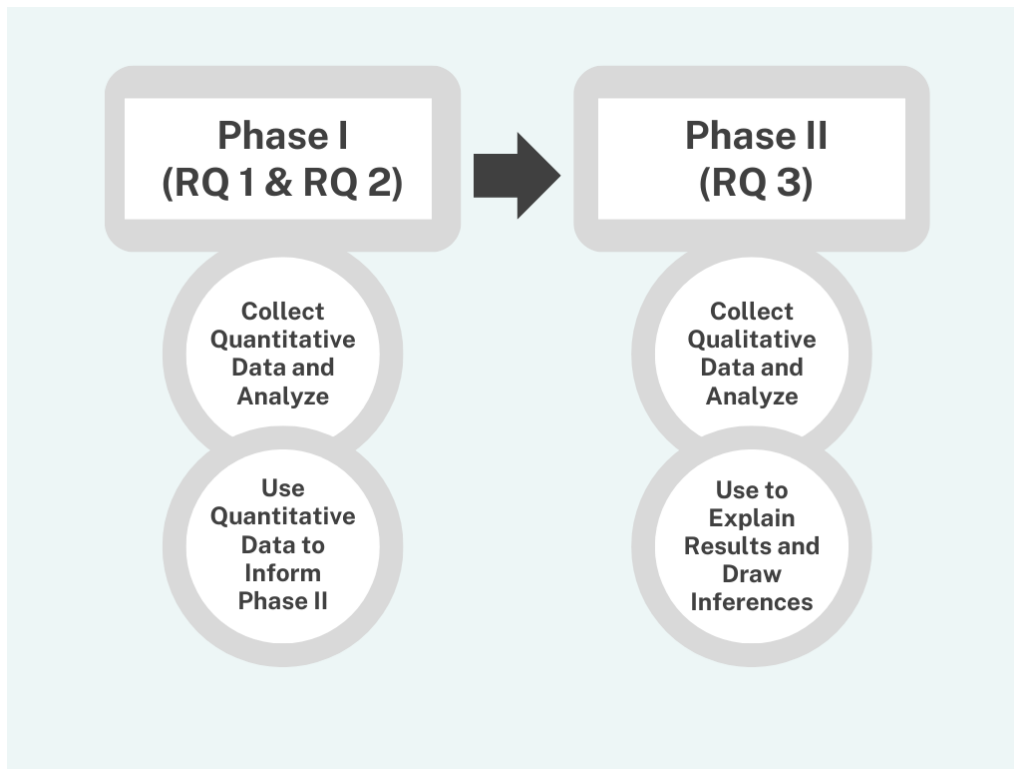
This study used an explanatory sequential mixed methods design to determine the prevalence of work-related burnout among academic librarians and its relationship (if any) to demographics, library leadership practices, and turnover intentions. During an explanatory sequential design, a researcher collects and analyzes quantitative data, then follows up by collecting pertinent qualitative data to explain significant, nonsignificant, or unexpected findings (Creswell, 2022). In this way, integration occurred by using the initial results from the quantitative phase to inform the planning of the qualitative phase (see Figure 4).

Quantitative data were first collected through the Academic Librarian Leadership and Burnout Survey. The work-related subscale of the CBI and the LPI: Observer were present on the survey along with questions related to demographics and turnover intention. The quantitative data were considered when revising the follow-up questions for the semi-structured interviews.

Also present at the end of the initial survey were two open-ended questions and the option to volunteer for a confidential, semi-structured interview. Table 2 provides an overview of the methods that addressed each research question. By collecting and comparing both quantitative and qualitative data from many different sources on this phenomenon, triangulation was used to validate the findings (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

Figure 4

Explanatory Sequential Mixed Methods Design



Note. Presented is an illustration of this study’s research design and its connections to the research questions.

Table 2*Overview of Multiple Methods to Be Used in this Research Study*

Evaluation Questions	Quantitative	Qualitative	
	Detailed Statistical Analysis	Open-Ended Questions	Semi-Structured Interviews
RQ1: Is there a relationship between the characteristics of academic librarians (sex, age, race, time in current position, and turnover intentions) in the southeastern region of the United States and the self-identification of work-related burnout as measured by the total work-related burnout subscale?	X		
RQ2: Is there a relationship between the perception of library leadership practices of academic librarians in the southeastern region of the United States as measured by the LPI: Observer and the self-identification of work-related burnout as measured by the total work-related burnout subscale?	X		
RQ3: What are the experiences of academic librarians in the southeastern region of the United States concerning the impact library leadership practices have on work-related burnout?		X	X

Population, Sample, and Selection of Participants

The target population for this research study was librarians currently working in an academic library within the southeastern region of the United States. The southeastern states

included Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. The participants for this study were recruited using multiple procedures (e.g., listservs, online ALA board postings, and direct emails) to avoid a low response rate (Dehghanpour & Herrmann, 2021). According to Godbey and Hoffman's (2024) analysis, there were 587 academic libraries in the Southeast with an average of eight librarians each. Therefore, the target population of academic librarians in the southeastern region of the United States was approximately 4,696.

In an explanatory sequential design, sampling occurs in two phases: quantitative and qualitative. Both phases utilized nonprobability sampling techniques, including convenience and criterion-based sampling. Additionally, the second phase incorporated probability sampling to select the final interviewees. Ary et al. (2019) explained that convenience sampling involved asking for survey research volunteers from easily accessible groups. During Phase I of this explanatory sequential mixed methods study (recruiting respondents for the initial survey), the survey link was posted on June 20, 2024, to library-related Listservs and the American Library Association discussion boards. The survey link was also emailed from June 20, 2024 to July 1, 2024, to academic librarians whose email addresses were publicly available on their institutions' websites. The selection criteria present on the survey included current employment in an academic library within the southeastern region of the United States, holding an MLIS or equivalent degree, and having a supervisor that also holds an MLIS or equivalent degree.

For Phase II of this explanatory sequential mixed methods study, any respondents who indicated a willingness to participate in a semi-structured interview and who met the research criteria were considered for follow-up interviews. To participate in the follow-up semi-structured interview, a respondent must have self-identified by providing their contact information.

Systematic sampling was used to select potential interviewees to contact. Interviews were conducted with 17 academic librarians who indicated they had experienced work-related burnout in their present position.

Instruments

Measurement is an important part of any reputable research. Ary et al. (2019) explicated the importance of data-gathering instruments having proven validity and reliability to support research results. Validity refers to the extent to which an instrument facilitates meaningful and accurate interpretations; reliability is an indicator of how consistently an instrument measures what it was designed to measure (Ary et al, 2019). In this explanatory sequential research study, data were collected in two phases with the emphasis being placed on the initial, quantitative data collection. The Academic Librarian Leadership and Burnout Survey was used to collect quantitative data during Phase I. Two instruments were included in The Academic Librarian Leadership and Burnout Survey, the work-related subscale of the CBI and the LPI: Observer. Both instruments have been proven valid and reliable (Berat et al., 2016; Posner, 2016; Shoman et al., 2021). The CBI is within the public domain; no permission was needed to incorporate it into this research study (Kristensen et al., 2005). The copyright for the LPI: Observer is held by John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated. Permission to reuse the LPI: Observer was granted on February 6, 2024 (see Appendix A). The data collected during Phase I were used to inform the data collected during Phase II. Phase II data were then used to explain Phase I data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). For this study, two data sets provided the data for the qualitative phase, the open-ended questions on the Academic Librarian Leadership and Burnout Survey and the semi-structured interviews. The emergent themes from these two data sets were used to further explain

the Phase I data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The following sections will discuss the instrumentation for Phase I and Phase II of this study.

Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI)

The CBI uses 19 items to measure burnout across three domains: personal burnout, work-related burnout, and client-related burnout (Kristensen et al., 2005). The items are divided into two 5-unit Likert scales, one measuring the frequency of occurrence and one measuring the intensity of a feeling (see Appendix B). The generic, personal burnout subscale was designed to compare individuals despite their occupational role. It explores how exhausted an individual believes themselves to be (Berat et al., 2016). The work-related burnout subscale focuses on the connection between exhaustion and fatigue and a respondent's place of employment. The client-related subscale measures the perceptions of those working with people and their perceived connection between their fatigue and working with people. This last subscale afforded great versatility for studies within medical and educational environments because it allowed researchers to replace the term client-related with patient-related (Barton et al., 2022; Thrush et al., 2021), colleague-related (Bolotov et al., 2021; Rocha et al., 2020), and student-related (Milfont et al., 2008).

In its initial presentation, Kristensen et al. (2005) included a critique of the dominating burnout instrument, the MBI, reasoning that measuring the dimensions of burnout separately was problematic. With this newer measure's introduction, researchers who study burnout have started opting to use the CBI rather than the MBI, noting several issues with the MBI. Berat et al. (2016) and Milfont et al. (2008) identified conceptual and methodological problems associated with the MBI. Library researchers preferred the CBI citing that the MBI was not available in the public

domain, was not cross cultural, and was unable to produce a multidimensional score (Demetres et al., 2020; Johnson, 2024; Wood et al., 2020).

The entire CBI, or an abbreviated version of it, has been used to globally evaluate burnout in healthcare personnel, emergency physicians, pharmacists, teachers, professors, academic staff, and librarians, accruing substantial evidence for its validity and reliability (Alameddine et al., 2022; Barton et al., 2022; Berat et al., 2016; Milfont et al., 2008; Rocha et al., 2020; Thrush et al., 2021). It has been translated into many languages including English, Japanese, Mandarin, Cantonese, Swedish, Russian, French, Portuguese, Malay, Korean, and Italian (Bolotov et al., 2021; Chin et al., 2017; Jeon et al., 2019; Kristensen et al., 2005; Sestili et al., 2018). Researchers have been impressed with its brevity, straightforwardness, ease of use, versatility, and flexibility (Barton et al., 2022; Berat et al., 2016; Chin et al., 2017; Jeon et al., 2019; Thrush et al., 2021). Kristensen et al. (2005) indicated that the CBI accurately predicted future absenteeism and the intention to quit one's position. Later, other researchers would echo this, noting that the CBI was moderately to highly correlated with measures of overall work environment, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions (Berat et al., 2016; Montgomery et al., 2021).

Shoman et al. (2021) conducted a systematic review of five burnout patient-reported outcome measures (PROMs). Using 19 studies, the researchers assessed the psychometric properties of the MBI, the Pines' Burnout Measure, the Psychologist Burnout Inventory, the OLBI, and the CBI. The researchers concluded the CBI was the most valid of the five measures reviewed. Other researchers have extolled the value of the CBI in comparison to other measures. Ogunsuji et al.'s (2022) pilot study reported the CBI had a better criterion (concurrent and predictive) and construct (convergent) validity than its counterparts, the MBI and the OLBI.

For this study, only the work-related subscale of the CBI was used to measure burnout in academic librarians (Kristensen et al., 2005). Researchers have reported that the seven-item work-related burnout subscale had a high internal reliability with a small non-response rate (Berat et al., 2016; Kristensen et al., 2005; Pate et al., 2023; Sestili et al., 2018; Wood et al., 2020). Other researchers across different disciplines and in different countries have used abbreviated versions of the CBI noting validity evidence and reliability support (Barton et al., 2022; Berat et al., 2016; Jeon et al., 2019). The work-related subscale has a 5-point rating scale (100, 75, 50, 25, 0). To compute the TWRBS, the total scores on the seven items were averaged.

Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI)

The LPI was developed to measure leadership practices. After conducting many in-depth interviews and analyzing written case studies, Kouzes and Posner (2023) generated a conceptual framework of leadership behaviors that accompanied personal best scenarios (Posner, n.d.). The LPI was developed as an empirical instrument to assess the transformational leadership model. There are two forms of the LPI available to researchers. One form is a leadership self-assessment, and the other is an observer's assessment of leadership. Both take approximately 10 to 20 minutes to complete. The only difference between these two forms is whether the behavior described is the respondent's or a leader's (Posner & Kouzes, 1988). The librarians' perceptions of their current leadership was assessed using the observer form of the LPI: Observer. Using the LPI: Observer, respondents answer questions about how often their leadership engages in certain leadership behaviors related to The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership (see Appendix C).

According to Posner's (n.d.) well-documented summary covering their instrument's development and rigor, triangulation of quantitative and qualitative data was used to produce the behavioral statements found within both forms of the LPI. Several iterative processes were

conducted to test and refine the assessment survey. The LPI is comprised of 30 statements divided into six statements relating to the leadership behaviors that are associated with each of The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership: Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart. These items are scored using a 10-point Likert scale with a higher score representing more frequent use of a leader's behavior. The scale anchors are: (1) Almost never do what is described in the statement; (2) Rarely; (3) Seldom; (4) Once in a while; (5) Occasionally; (6) Sometimes; (7) Fairly Often; (8) Usually; (9) Very Frequently; and (10) Almost always do what is described in the statement. To compute the LPI composite score, the scores of all 30 items are added and then averaged. To compute the individual leadership practices scores, the six items associated with each practice are added and then averaged.

The LPI is a robust instrument that is highly regarded by practitioners and academics worldwide (Anand & Udaysuriyan, 2010; Posner, 2016). Although most respondents have completed the LPI in English, translations of it are available in Spanish, Chinese, Brazilian Portuguese, Mongolian, and Arabic. Its findings represent more than 70 countries (Hage & Posner, 2015; Posner, 2016). Bass and Riggio (2006) mentioned the wide use of the LPI by practitioners but noted that the use by practitioners has outweighed its appearance in published empirical research. The LPI has been incorporated globally into studies performed across a wide variety of disciplines, organizations, industries, and institutions (Abu-Tineh et al., 2008; Dunn et al., 2012; Hage & Posner, 2015; Posner, n.d.; Zagorsek et al., 2004). In academia, these have included numerous unpublished doctoral dissertations, research reports, and paper presentations (Posner, n.d.). Studies conducted with law enforcement (Vito & Higgins, 2010), sales managers (Caza & Posner, 2019), professionals in education (Burkman et al., 2019; Smith, 2011), and

healthcare workers (Clavelle et al., 2012; Hunt, 2014; Kusy et al., 1995) have utilized the LPI in their assessments of leadership.

Validity. The CBI has been noted by researchers in different fields across the globe as valid (Barton et al., 2022; Bolatov et al., 2021; Chin et al. 2017; Milfont et al., 2008; Piperac et al., 2021; Rocha et al., 2020). Chin et al. (2017) investigated the validity evidence of the Malay translation of the CBI. The researchers reported a satisfactory level of face validity which included clarity (82.7%), comprehension (85.9%), and universal face validity (83.2%). Montgomery et al. (2021) examined the psychometric properties of the CBI using registered nurses ($N = 928$). Construct and convergent validity were demonstrated by the study results.

Abbreviated versions of the CBI have also been proven valid (Barton et al., 2022; Berat et al. 2016; Johnson, 2024). Barton et al.'s (2022) study identified a 2-factor, 6-item abbreviated version of the CBI for assessing the burnout risk in emergency medical residents. Two findings provided substantial validity evidence for this assessment. The overall frequency of burnout findings was like other studies that employed the validated MBI. Consistent to other studies, they also noted the increase of burnout as residents progressed through training.

The LPI has been deemed valid by researchers from around the world (Posner, 2016; Posner & Kouzes, 1988; Vito & Higgins, 2010). Posner noted that the LPI's face validity was excellent due to its items being related to the qualitative findings used to construct its behavioral statements. Huber et al. (2000) used an expert focus group consensus methodology to evaluate available instruments for measuring leadership. The group used two scales to evaluate the psychometric properties and the ease-of-use in a practice setting. Of 18 leadership-related instruments reviewed, only Kouzes and Posner's LPI received the highest scores on both.

Reliability. The CBI's reliability has been confirmed by researchers in numerous fields and numerous languages (Barton et al., 2022; Bolatov et al., 2021; Milfont et al., 2008; Piperac et al., 2021; Rocha et al., 2020; Sestili et al., 2018). The original, 19-item CBI received an overall Cronbach's alpha score for reliability of 0.94 in Barton et al.'s (2022) cross-sectional study of emergency medicine residents, in Bolatov et al.'s (2021) study of psychometric properties in a sample of Russian-speaking medical students, and in Piperac et al.'s (2021) cross-sectional study of the Serbian version of the CBI among preschool teachers in Serbia.

In the original study, Project on Burnout, Motivation and Job Satisfaction (PUMA), the Cronbach alphas for each subscale of the CBI were 0.87 for personal burnout, 0.87 for work-related burnout, and 0.85 for client-related burnout, indicating good internal consistency (Kristensen et al., 2005). Researchers would later reconfirm that each individual subscale of the CBI produced high reliability scores. Montgomery et al. (2021) reported excellent internal consistency reliability for each of the CBI's individual subscales. The Cronbach's alphas reported were personal burnout (0.91), work-related burnout (0.89), and client-related burnout (0.92). Berat et al. (2016) employed a cross-sectional design to examine the psychometric properties of the work-related burnout scale. The researchers concluded that the work-related burnout scale represented a reliable measurement of emotional burnout at work, stating that the work-related burnout subscale had similar psychometric characteristics to the entire CBI questionnaire.

Two studies found that the LPI was highly and significantly correlated with the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ- X5), the most widely used leadership measurement in research (Carless et al., 2000; Chen & Baron, 2007; Posner, 2016). The Cronbach alpha coefficients for the LPI: Observer were consistently very strong: Model the Way (.855), Inspire a

Shared Vision (.921), Challenge the Process (.876), Enable Others to Act (.873), and Encourage the Heart (.921) (Posner, n.d.). The five leadership practices have also demonstrated excellent test-retest reliability (Lee et al., 2010; Posner, n.d.). Other researchers have noted the LPI: Observer's high internal consistency ratings (Abu-Tineh et al., 2008; Herold et al., 1993).

Open-Ended Questions

The Academic Librarian Leadership and Burnout Survey used open-ended questions to gather data on library leadership practices that either contributed to or mitigated work-related burnout. Open-ended questions do not limit respondent responses, rather they permit respondents to answer freely. This is especially useful when a researcher is unable to predict all the possible respondent answers (Ary et al., 2019). The open-ended questions placed at the end of the Academic Librarian Leadership and Burnout Survey were:

1. Describe library leadership practices you feel would contribute to work-related burnout in academic libraries.
2. Describe library leadership practices you feel would mitigate work-related burnout in academic libraries.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Interviews are an effective means for generating data researchers could use to examine and understand research problems (Ary et al., 2019). This study used semi-structured interviews to explain Phase I data. In a semi-structured interview, the researcher used a prepared interview guide, asking follow-up questions. The same starting point is used with each interviewee, but the interviews have the potential to vary between respondents (Roulston, 2022). The following questions were asked during the semi-structured interviews:

1. In what state do you currently work?

2. What is your current position?
3. How many years have you been working in your current position?
4. Can you describe any experiences of work-related burnout that you have had in your current position? How did these experiences make you feel?
5. How have library leadership practices impacted your experiences with work-related burnout? Can you provide me with an example of that?
6. Would you ever consider leaving your current position due to work-related burnout? Why or why not?
7. Is there anything else that you would like to share about your experience with work-related burnout in the academic library?

In addition to collecting demographic data, these interview questions were developed with the primary goal of understanding academic librarians' unique experiences with work-related burnout. Recognizing the importance of tapping into their specific knowledge and perspectives, these questions were crafted to further explain the data gathered from The Academic Librarian Leadership and Burnout Survey. The intent was to design appropriate questions that were open-ended, encouraging detailed responses, and non-leading, ensuring objectivity and avoiding any influence on the interviewees' responses.

The semi-structured interview questions were developed based on a comprehensive consideration of the study's research objectives, core questions, and findings from the extensive literature review. The interview questions were then revised after collecting and analyzing the Academic Librarian Leadership and Burnout Survey data, allowing them to be grounded in existing knowledge and to directly address emerging themes. Probing questions were included to encourage deeper exploration and richer detail from the interviewees. The questions were

organized into a logical sequence, commencing with a clear introduction script to establish rapport and outline the interview's purpose and confidentiality. Finally, a pilot test was conducted.

Validity. A field test was used to establish validity for the semi-structured interview questions. Three academic librarians were asked to participate in this field test, during which the research questions asked were discussed, focusing on their understandability and conciseness (Seidman, 2019). No data were collected during this field test and these participants did not participate in the final interviews. The feedback from this field test was used to confirm and make slight edits to the questions used in the semi-structured interviews.

Data Collection

Before data collection began, the required paperwork was submitted to Valdosta State University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). Once the IRB determined the study was exempt (see Appendix D), two methods were used to collect data for this study. For Phase I, an Internet-based survey was sent to library-related Listservs and academic librarians working within the Southeast. During Phase II, the answers to the open-ended questions from the Academic Librarian Leadership and Burnout Survey were considered, and qualitative data were collected through follow-up semi-structured interviews based on recommendations by Ary et al. (2019), Seidman (2019), and Roulston (2022). The primary data source for this study was the quantitative data collected from the Internet-based survey (see Appendix E). The data collected from the open-ended questions found at the end of the Academic Librarian Leadership and Burnout Survey as well as the data collected from the follow-up semi-structured interviews were used to expound upon the survey data from the quantitative phase.

Phase I: Quantitative Data Collection

To collect quantitative data, the researcher used email solicitations and discussion board posts. The emails and discussion board posts contained the same language, including an introduction that places the study in context, a notification of participants' rights, informed consent, the necessary criteria for participation, and a link to the anonymous survey hosted on Qualtrics (see Appendix F). Listservs allow large groups of people to communicate through email. The researcher contacted the listservs used for this study on June 20, 2024, and included the following:

- Association of Southeastern Research Libraries (ASERL),
- Center for Research Libraries' LIBLICENSE,
- Electronic Resources in Libraries (ERIL),
- Kent State University's LIBREF,
- Serials in Libraries' SERIALST,
- Southeastern Library Association (SELA),
- Alabama Association of College and Research Libraries (AACRL),
- Alabama Library Association (ALALA),
- Alabama Post Secondary Listserv (ACA-LIB),
- Network of Alabama Academic Libraries (NAAL),
- University of Alabama Libraries (UALIB),
- Arkansas Library Association (ArLA),
- Florida Association of College and Research Libraries (FACRL),
- Georgia Library Association (GLA),
- University of Kentucky Library Instruction Round Table (KLALIB),

- Mississippi Library Association (MLA),
- Missouri Association of College and Research Libraries (MACRL),
- North Carolina Library Association (NCLA),
- Tennessee Libraries, and
- West Virginia Network (WVNET).

The same solicitation for research respondents was posted on discussion boards hosted by the American Library Association (ALA). ALA Connect provides an online platform for discussion and collaboration between ALA members. The discussion boards had the potential to reach thousands of respondents. The discussion board postings were made on June 21, 2024, and included the following:

- Academic Library Services to Graduate Students Interest Group (1,700 members),
- Academic Library Services to International Students Interest Group (1,300 members),
- Association of College & Research Libraries Assessment Discussion Group (455 members),
- Association of College & Research Libraries Community and Junior College Libraries Section (2,600 members),
- Association of College & Research Libraries College Libraries Section (5,300 members),
- Association of College & Research Libraries Digital Scholarship Section (3,200 members),
- Association of College & Research Libraries Distance and Online Learning Section (3,100 members),
- Association of College & Research Libraries Instruction Section (5,800 members),

- Association of College & Research Libraries University Libraries Section (6,500 members) and,
- Association of College & Research Libraries Leadership Discussion Group (396 members).

In addition to emailing and posting to the Listservs and ALA Connect discussion boards, the researcher sent solicitation emails with the same wording to academic librarians working within the southeastern states at approximately 479 college and universities. Their email addresses were acquired through the public directories available online. These email solicitations were sent from June 20, 2024, to July 1, 2024.

Well-developed electronic surveys hosted on web-based survey instruments are useful when conducting research because they effectively collect, analyze, manage, and store data (Dehghanpour & Herrmann, 2021). The Academic Librarian Leadership and Burnout Survey was hosted on Qualtrics. It began with an introduction that provided the study's title, information about participation, the researcher's contact information, and participant consent (see Appendix G). The final question on the Academic Librarian Leadership and Burnout Survey asked participants if they were interested in volunteering for a follow-up semi-structured interview. If they answered yes, they were directed to a different page that allowed them to enter their email address. If they answered no, they could select the option to submit the survey. After survey submission, the researcher's contact information was displayed.

Phase II: Qualitative Data Collection

In an explanatory sequential research design, after analyzing the quantitative data, participant selection for the second phase begins (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Participants for Phase II of this study self-identified themselves by providing the researcher with their contact

information. After determining what quantitative results needed further explanation, the semi-structured interview questions were refined, and 17 volunteers were chosen for solicitation. An email containing the research consent statement was sent to schedule online interviews on August 21, 2024 (see Appendix H). Microsoft Teams was used to conduct and record the semi-structured interviews, all scheduled during September 2024. As recommended by Roulston (2022), the researcher transcribed the interviews and sent them to each participant for verification after transcription.

Timeline for Data Collection

All necessary documentation was submitted to Valdosta State University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) for approval. Once notified on June 18, 2024, that the IRB had granted approval, Phase I data collection began. This consisted of posting the Academic Librarian Leadership and Burnout Survey information into the aggregated library-related Listservs and the American Library Association discussion boards as well as sending out the Academic Librarian Leadership and Burnout Survey research solicitation to academic librarians employed in southeastern states via their work emails. The online survey was closed on July 31, 2024.

Phase II data collection consisted of semi-structured interviews beginning on September 9, 2024. This provided enough time to analyze the quantitative data, to refine the interview questions, and to contact the participants to participate in the follow-up semi-structured interviews. During the interviews, the researcher asked a series of questions relating to the interviewees' experiences with work-related burnout in the academic library (see Appendix I). After the interview process concluded on September 18, 2024, the researcher made transcripts and sent them to each participant to check for accuracy. The transcripts were revised as suggested by the participant. The final transcripts were analyzed for themes.

Data Analysis

Quantitative research involves using related variables to answer a research question. Variables are individual or organizational attributes that can be observed or measured; these attributes vary between individuals or organizations (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Phase I of this study consisted of one dependent variable and 11 independent variables. The TWRBS from the CBI was the dependent variable in this study. Independent variables influence outcomes. The independent variables in this study included 1) time working in the current academic librarian position, 2) age, 3) sex, 4) race/ethnicity, 5) LPI: Observer composite score, LPI: Observer individual practices scores (6) Model the Way, 7) Inspire a Shared Vision, 8) Challenge the Process, 9) Enable Others to Act, 10) Encourage the Heart), and 11) turnover intention. The independent variables were defined as follows:

- *Time in current position.* Time in current position was defined as the number of years the academic librarian has been employed as an academic librarian in their current position. This continuous variable was transformed into a categorical variable that included the following groups: less than 1 year, 1–5 years, 6–10 years, 11–19 years, and 20+ years.
- *Age.* Age was defined as the age of the academic librarian. This continuous variable was transformed into a categorical variable that included the following: 18–34, 35–44, 45–54, 55–64, 65+, and Prefer not to say.
- *Sex.* Sex was defined as male or female.
- *Race.* Race was defined as American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Black/African American, Hispanic, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, White, or People of all other racial/ethnic groups.

- *LPI: Observer composite score.* The LPI: Observer composite score was a single score derived from all the LPI: Observer individual practices scores. It was an average of the five practices summary scores.
- *LPI: Observer individual practices score.* Each of the five practices (Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart) received an average summary score.
- *Turnover intention.* Turnover intention was defined as whether a respondent had considered leaving their current academic librarian position due to work-related burnout. This categorical variable was assessed by a yes/no question.

In this study, quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analyzed in two phases involving both types of analyses. It is important to note how the different types of data and their analyses integrated with one another. Integration for this study occurred at two points. The first integration took place when the quantitative results from Phase I were used to inform the development of the Phase II qualitative data collection. Questions that needed more insight were considered. Once Phase II was completed, the sets of data were integrated so that conclusions were drawn about how the qualitative results explained the quantitative results (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

Phase I: Quantitative Data Analysis

The first two research questions were analyzed using the quantitative data collected on the Academic Librarian Leadership and Burnout Survey. This included demographic information (sex, age, race, time in current position), TWRBSs, LPI: Observer scores, and the answers to the question about turnover intention. Descriptive statistics were run on demographic data to summarize the characteristics of respondents participating in the study. Before beginning

analyses, the appropriate assumptions were considered and verified. These included normality, independence, equal variance, linearity, homoscedasticity, and the absence of multicollinearity. For variables with more than two categorical variables (e.g., age group: 18–34, 35–44, 45–54, 55–64, 65+) an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used. An independent samples t-test was used to assess relationships for categorical variables with two levels (e.g., turnover intention). Regression analysis was conducted to explore the relationship between leadership practices and the TWRBSs.

RQ1: Is there a relationship between the characteristics of academic librarians (sex, age, race, time in current position, and turnover intentions) in the southeastern region of the United States and the self-identification of work-related burnout as measured by the total work-related burnout subscale? An ANOVA was used to test possible relationships between the CBI's TWRBSs and sex, age, race, and time in current position. An independent samples t-test was used to address the influence categorical variables (turnover intention) had on work-related burnout.

RQ2: Is there a relationship between the perception of library leadership practices of academic librarians in the southeastern region of the United States as measured by the LPI: Observer and the self-identification of work-related burnout as measured by the total work-related burnout subscale? Regression analyses were used to determine if a relationship existed between the predictor variable (LPI: Observer composite score) and the outcome variable (TWRBS).

Phase II: Qualitative Data Analysis

After concluding Phase I and analyzing the quantitative data to answer Research Questions 1 and 2, Phase II of data analysis began. The researcher analyzed the final research

using the qualitative data collected from the open-ended questions on the Academic Librarian Leadership and Burnout Survey and the data collected from the follow-up interviews. Both sets of data were organized and prepared for analysis. An inductive/deductive hybrid method of thematic analysis was used. This approach is considered rigorous and can be synthesized with quantitative analysis in a mixed methods study (Proudfoot, 2023). Coding involved breaking the text down, placing it into categories that were labeled; special attention was given to expected codes, surprising codes, and codes of unusual or conceptual interest (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). The original codes developed based on the information collected from the survey respondents and the interviewees. After establishing these codes, subthemes were identified. The codes were then categorized according to the five leadership traits proposed by Kouzes and Posner (2023) to address this study's theoretical underpinnings and to strengthen its contribution to existing knowledge.

RQ3: What are the experiences of academic librarians in the southeastern region of the United States concerning the impact library leadership practices have on work-related burnout? To answer this question, qualitative data were collected from the open-ended questions at the end of the Academic Librarian Leadership and Burnout Survey as well as the transcripts from the follow-up interviews.

The answers to the open-ended questions from the Academic Librarian Leadership and Burnout Survey were exported into a spreadsheet and read over multiple times. Initially, inductive coding using sampling and recoding was used to develop codes directly from the survey responses (Ary et al., 2019). The first half of the survey answers were examined, and codes were generated. This same sample was read through again and the generated codes were applied. The second half of the data was read, and the established codes were applied. Any codes

that did not match were noted, and new codes were created. All data were reread, and all responses were recoded. Next, subthemes were established within the original codes. This approach facilitated a more nuanced examination of the data and revealed important interrelationships among the codes. Finally, the codes were categorized using the predetermined five Kouzes and Posner's leadership practices.

The interview transcripts from the Microsoft Teams recordings were read through during this process. Identifying information was removed and minor edits were made. The edited copies of these transcripts were sent to the interviewees for final approval. Adopting a constructivist perspective, this researcher read through all the finalized transcripts reflecting on the overall meaning and considering how the interviewees' unique perspectives shaped their experiences. Notes were made, and generalized thoughts about each interview were recorded. The analysis began with a deductive approach, applying codes from the survey's open-ended questions to the interview responses. While these preliminary codes guided the text analysis, they did not constrain it (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). Emerging codes were documented and incorporated throughout the process, then placed into subthemes constructed, formulated, and revised by the researcher Saldaña (2021). Ultimately, all codes were categorized according to Kouzes and Posner's five leadership practices or placed in an Other category.

Protection of Human Subjects

Before this study began, the researcher filed all required paperwork and obtained permission to complete the study from Valdosta State University's IRB. Potential participants were informed of how identifiable characteristics would be used. Statistical data were not used for individual purposes; however, the researcher did use them for aggregate reporting and analyses. The initial Qualtrics survey was anonymous, and responses were not connected to

personal identity. The semi-structured volunteer interviewees were assured that all transcript data would be kept confidential. The privacy rights of all participants were maintained. The researcher made all necessary and recommended efforts to protect anonymity and confidentiality

Summary

The multifaceted purpose of this study was to measure the prevalence of work-related burnout in academic librarians in the southeastern region of the United States; to examine the relationships (if any) work-related burnout has with demographics, perceived leadership practices, and turnover intention; and to explain how leadership practices impact work-related burnout in the academic library. The participants were academic librarians currently employed in the southeastern region of the United States. For the quantitative phase, the Academic Librarian Leadership and Burnout Survey was used to collect data. Two open-ended questions from the Academic Librarian Leadership and Burnout Survey along with follow-up semi-structured interviews provided the data for the qualitative phase analysis. The next chapter discusses the results of the study.

Chapter IV

Results

This explanatory sequential mixed-methods study measured the prevalence of work-related burnout in academic librarians in the southeastern region of the United States. It also examined the relationships work-related burnout had with demographics, perceived leadership practices, and turnover intention to explain how leadership practices impacted work-related burnout in academic librarians. The Academic Librarian Leadership and Burnout Survey, hosting a subscale from the CBI and the entirety of the LPI: Observer, provided the data for the quantitative phase which was then used to inform the qualitative phase. Two data sets, the open-ended questions found on the Academic Librarian Leadership and Burnout Survey and the semi-structured interviews, provided the evidence for the qualitative phase. The findings in this chapter will begin with an overview of the demographic data collected during the initial survey, followed by analyses and a summary of the results presented in the order of the three research questions guiding this study.

Demographics

The participants in this study were academic librarians currently employed within the southeastern region of the United States. Godbey and Hoffman (2024) posited that within the southeastern region of the United States there were 587 academic libraries, each with an average of eight academic librarians per institution. This resulted in a target population of approximately 4,696. Initially, there was a total of 1,073 respondents who attempted to answer the original survey. Many of these were excluded ($n = 561$) because they did not meet the requirements of

working in a southeastern academic library, holding an MLIS or equivalent degree, having a supervisor who held an MLIS or equivalent degree, and finishing the survey. The results of the surveys provided the quantitative data for this study and included representation from each of the 13 states within the southeastern region of the United States. North Carolina academic librarians were the most represented at 16%, with West Virginia being the least represented at 1.4% (see Table 3).

Participants were solicited through emails, listservs, and board postings, resulting in a final sample of 512, which represented approximately 9.17% of academic librarians employed in the southeastern United States. Because some of the research participation requests were posted on national discussion boards and emailed to listservs, it is unknown exactly how many academic librarians in the Southeast received these solicitations. However, it is important to note that there were several factors that may have impacted the number of responses received. First, the research solicitations were posted and emailed at the end of June during the summer semester. Due to the number of out of office messages the work email solicitations received, it can be assumed that many librarians may not have received the link of the survey in time to participate once returning from their extended work absences. Secondly, only academic librarians who were registered with the library-related Listservs and the ALA discussion boards would have received the request for research participants. Finally, only academic librarians whose email addresses were publicly available on their institutions' websites were individually contacted. In all, academic librarians from 479 schools and universities were directly solicited.

Table 3*Participant Response by State*

State	<i>n</i>	Percentage
Alabama	27	5.3%
Arkansas	11	2.1%
Florida	76	14.8%
Georgia	69	13.5%
Kentucky	44	8.6%
Louisiana	19	3.7%
Mississippi	15	2.9%
Missouri	26	5.1%
North Carolina	82	16.0%
South Carolina	24	4.7%
Tennessee	50	9.8%
Virginia	62	12.1%
West Virginia	7	1.4%
Total	512	100%

Descriptive Statistics

The participant demographics included sex, age, race, and time in current position (see Table 4). Of the 512 respondents that completed the Academic Librarian Leadership and Burnout Survey, 17.4% were male, 79.1% were female, and 3.5% opted not to say. The majority of the respondents (29.3%) were in the 35 - 44 years age range followed closely by the 45-54 years age range (27.7%). The least represented age range was 65+ (4.1%) and 1.4% of academic librarians preferred not to specify an age range. The overwhelming majority of the respondents were White (90.4%), followed by Black/African Americans (5.3%) and Hispanics (1.6%). American Indian/Alaska Natives and Asians were both represented at 0.2% with People of all other racial/ethnic groups at 0.6%. These demographics were similar to what others have noted as the demographic makeup of American librarians (American Library Association, 2017; Le, 2021). Of the 512 respondents, the largest group had been in their current position for 1-5 years

(34.2%). The group containing the lowest number of respondents had been in their current positions for less than 1 year (9.2%).

Table 4

Participant Demographic Data

Category	Groups	<i>n</i>	Percentage
Sex	Male	89	17.4%
	Female	405	79.1%
	Prefer not to say	18	3.5%
Age	18–34 years	101	19.7%
	35–44 years	150	29.3%
	45–54 years	142	27.7%
	55–64 years	91	17.8%
	65+ years	21	4.1%
	Prefer not to say	7	1.4%
Race	American Indian/Alaska Native	1	0.2%
	Asian	1	0.2%
	Black/African American	27	5.3%
	Hispanic	8	1.6%
	White	463	90.4%
	People of all other racial/ethnic groups	3	0.6%
	Prefer not to say	9	1.8%
Time in Current Position	Less than 1 year	47	9.2%
	1–5 years	175	34.2%
	6–10 years	115	22.5%
	11–19 years	95	18.6%
	20+ years	80	15.6%

The average TWRBS for academic librarians working in the southeastern United States was 47.57 (see Table 5). Academic librarians in Louisiana ($M = 54.51$) evidenced the highest average TWRBS with Alabama ($M = 54.10$) following closely. The southeastern state presenting the lowest average TWRBS was West Virginia ($M = 40.31$), but it is important to note that West Virginia was the least represented in the study ($n = 7$). These scores were similar to research conducted by others (Demetres et al., 2020; Wood et al., 2020). Wood et al. (2020) discovered that academic librarians within the United States scored an average of 49.6 on the total work-

related burnout subscale. Demetres et al.'s (2020) study revealed an average TWRBS of 46.4 amongst information professionals serving as reference, clinical, or research librarians. The overall average of this study falls within the range established by these previous studies, suggesting a consistent level of work-related burnout is being experienced by academic librarians across different geographical locations and different roles within the academic library.

Table 5

Average TWRBSs by State

State	Mean TWRBS	SD
Alabama	54.10	22.32
Arkansas	43.83	25.76
Florida	51.74	23.61
Georgia	47.10	22.39
Kentucky	43.43	19.04
Louisiana	54.51	24.54
Mississippi	41.67	11.02
Missouri	47.80	23.21
North Carolina	49.00	21.88
South Carolina	46.88	21.67
Tennessee	42.86	20.02
Virginia	45.97	21.96
West Virginia	40.31	18.18
Southeastern Region	47.57	21.87

As with other studies that used this subscale, the TWRBS was calculated by adding together the scores from each question in the work-related burnout subscale (Wood et al., 2020). Survey question 4 required reverse scoring. After the scores were added, they were then divided by 7 to calculate the average work-related burnout score. Table 6 represents the TWRBS average for each item. The item with the highest average on the total work-related burnout subscale was Question 4, “Do you have enough energy for family and friends during leisure time,” with 45.1% of the respondents indicating this is true for them sometimes. Question 6, “Does your work

frustrate you” presented the next highest item average with 44.5% of the respondents indicating that their work frustrated them sometimes. When asked Question 7, “Do you feel burnt out because of your work,” 69.7% of the respondents indicated that they always, often, or sometimes did.

Table 6

Item Averages for Total Work-Related Burnout Subscale

	<i>n</i>	Percentage	Mean	<i>SD</i>
1. Do you feel worn out at the end of the working day?				
To a very high degree	73	14.3%	79.01	12.49
To a high degree	147	28.7%	59.89	11.34
Somewhat	178	34.8%	40.51	12.01
To a low degree	91	17.8%	59.89	10.15
To a very low degree	23	4.5%	79.01	7.86
2. Are you exhausted in the morning at the thought of another day at work?				
To a very high degree	56	10.9%	81.12	12.25
To a high degree	99	19.3%	65.55	10.83
Somewhat	129	25.2%	51.74	11.00
To a low degree	121	23.6%	36.25	9.35
To a very low degree	107	20.9%	21.16	10.29
3. Do you feel that every working hour is tiring for you?				
To a very high degree	26	5.1%	89.15	7.52
To a high degree	56	10.9%	74.17	9.34
Somewhat	133	26.0%	59.16	10.78
To a low degree	142	27.7%	42.83	11.80
To a very low degree	155	30.3%	25.39	11.76
4. Do you have enough energy for family and friends during leisure time?				
Always	36	7.0%	22.42	14.97
Often	160	31.3%	33.48	15.09
Sometimes	231	45.1%	52.81	17.87
Seldom	79	15.4%	69.53	15.71
Never/Almost never	6	1.2%	83.33	14.23
5. Is your work emotionally exhausting?				
Always	37	7.2%	82.43	14.30
Often	125	24.4%	65.49	12.08
Sometimes	195	38.1%	45.07	14.94
Seldom	124	24.2%	31.42	12.19
Never/Almost never	31	6.1%	14.06	11.40

	<i>n</i>	Percentage	Mean	<i>SD</i>
6. Does your work frustrate you?				
Always	40	7.8%	82.59	12.77
Often	130	25.4%	64.59	13.14
Sometimes	228	44.5%	42.64	14.19
Seldom	91	17.8%	28.22	12.94
Never/Almost never	23	4.5%	15.99	16.11
7. Do you feel burnt out because of your work?				
Always	58	11.3%	81.90	10.57
Often	112	21.9%	65.02	10.87
Sometimes	187	36.5%	45.30	10.84
Seldom	101	19.7%	30.23	8.81
Never/Almost never	54	10.5%	14.81	8.22

Note. Each question was answered on a 5-point rating Likert scale. Survey question 4 required reverse scoring.

Analysis of Data

The remainder of this chapter presents the results and the analyses organized around each of the three research questions. In this study, there were two phases of data analysis. The first phase consisted of quantitative data collected online through the Academic Librarian Leadership and Burnout Survey that contained two instruments, the total work-related burnout subscale from the CBI and the LPI: Observer. These data sets were exported from Qualtrics into Microsoft Excel, where they were cleaned by removing respondents who did not meet the participation criteria and by removing incomplete surveys. The remaining quantitative data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 29). Before beginning analyses, the appropriate assumptions were made. These included normality, independence, equal variance, linearity, homoscedasticity, and the absence of multicollinearity. The independent samples t-test was used to assess relationships for categorical variables with two levels. For variables with more than two categorical variables, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used. Regression analysis was conducted to explore the relationship between leadership practices and TWRBSs.

The second phase involved data from two data sets, the open-ended questions from the Academic Librarian Leadership and Burnout Survey and the semi-structured interviews. After the quantitative data were analyzed, potential interviewees were solicited, scheduled, and interviewed. Microsoft Excel was used to manage and organize the discovered codes and themes from both the open-ended questions and the follow-up interviews.

Phase 1: Quantitative Phase

The first two research questions were explored during Phase 1. Research Question 1 was addressed by collecting the respondents' demographic information and determining significant differences of the TWRBSs according to the demographic groups. The demographic information collected included sex, age, race, time in current position, and turnover intention. Research Question 2 was answered by comparing the average TWRBSs with the average LPI: Observer scores. The following sections are separated by research question and provide the findings for each.

Research Question 1

RQ1 is stated as follows: Is there a relationship between the characteristics of academic librarians (sex, age, race, time in current position, and turnover intentions) in the southeastern region of the United States and the self-identification of work-related burnout as measured by the total work-related burnout subscale? The CBI's work-related subscale data were used to inform this question. The TWRBS was computed for each respondent and then averaged for each demographic category (see Table 7). The decision was made to combine the American Indian/Alaska Native and Asian categories with the People of all other racial/ethnic group due to there being only one representative from each.

Table 7*Average TWRBSs by Demographic Groups*

Demographic Category	Groups	<i>n</i> (%)	Mean TWRBS	<i>SD</i>
Sex	Male	89 (17.38%)	45.99	23.06
	Female	405 (79.10%)	47.54	21.44
	Prefer not to say	18 (3.52%)	56.15	24.71
Age	18–34 years	101 (19.73%)	45.83	19.40
	35–44 years	150 (29.30%)	48.57	21.16
	45–54 years	142 (27.73%)	49.80	23.96
	55–64 years	91 (17.97%)	45.21	20.46
	65+ years	21 (4.10%)	35.54	23.51
	Prefer not to say	7 (1.37%)	72.96	13.66
	Race	African American	27 (5.27%)	43.65
Hispanic		8 (1.56%)	44.64	14.91
White		463 (90.43%)	47.59	21.94
All other groups		5 (0.98%)	57.14	19.67
Prefer not to say		9 (1.76%)	55.95	28.40
Time in Current Position		Less than 1 year	47 (9.18%)	32.90
	1–5 years	175 (34.18%)	47.51	20.51
	6–10 years	115 (2.46%)	50.00	22.49
	11–19 years	95 (18.55%)	53.61	20.36
	20+ years	80 (15.63%)	45.67	23.49
Turnover Intention	No	241 (47.07%)	34.02	16.40
	Yes	271 (52.93%)	59.62	18.88

A cursory glance of the data within each demographic category revealed that the highest average TWRBS included those who preferred not to say what their sex was ($M = 56.15$), those who preferred not to say what their age was ($M = 72.96$), People of all other racial/ethnic groups ($M = 57.14$), those who had been in their current position for 11–19 years ($M = 53.61$), and those who answered affirmatively that they had considered leaving their current position due to work-related burnout ($M = 59.62$). One-way ANOVAs were used to test the relationships between the four independent variables: sex, age, race, and time in current position with the average TWRBSs. An independent samples t-test was used to test the relationship between the independent variable, turnover intention, and the TWRBSs.

Sex

In this study, sex was defined as male and female, with respondents also given the option to choose “Prefer not to say.” The null hypothesis and research hypothesis regarding sex and the TWRBSs were:

H₀: There is no statistically significant relationship between academic librarians’ sex and their self-identification of work-related burnout.

H₁: There is a statistically significant relationship between academic librarians’ sex and their self-identification of work-related burnout.

An ANOVA was conducted to determine if the TWRBSs were different for different sexes. Participants were classified into three groups: male ($n = 89$), female ($n = 405$), and Prefer not to say ($n = 18$). There were no outliers as assessed by boxplots. Data were normally distributed for the Prefer not to say group as assessed by the Shapiro-Wilk test ($p > .05$). The male and female groups were further assessed using Q-Q plots. Both Q-Q plots for each group indicated that the data were approximately normally distributed with some deviations at the tails. There was homogeneity of variances, as assessed by Levene’s test of homogeneity of variances ($p = .432$). Data are presented as mean \pm standard deviation. The TWRBSs increased from male (46.99 ± 23.06) to female (47.54 ± 23.06), to Prefer not to say (56.15 ± 24.71). However, the differences between these groups were not statistically significant, $F(2, 509) = 1.623$, $p = .198$ (see Table 8). Because the group means were not statistically significant ($p > .05$), we cannot reject the null hypothesis, and we cannot accept the research hypothesis. It’s important to note that with only 18 participants, the Prefer not to say group may lack sufficient statistical power, potentially affecting the reliability of comparisons.

Table 8*Analysis of Variance of Participants' Sex on TWRBSs*

	Sum of Squares	<i>df</i>	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	Sig.
Between Groups	1548.689	2	774.344	1.623	.198
Within Groups	242832.290	509	477.077		
Total	244380.979	511			

Age

Age groups were presented to respondents in six categories: 18–34 years, 35–44 years, 45–54 years, 55–64 years, 65+ years, and Prefer not to say. The null hypothesis and research hypothesis regarding age and the TWRBSs were:

H₀: There is no statistically significant relationship between academic librarians' age and their self-identification of work-related burnout.

H₁: There is a statistically significant relationship between academic librarians' age and their self-identification of work-related burnout.

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine if the TWRBSs were different for different age groups. Participants were classified into six groups: 18–34 ($n = 101$), 35–44 ($n = 150$), 45–54 ($n = 142$), 55–64 ($n = 91$), 65+ ($n = 21$), and Prefer not to say ($n = 7$). There were no outliers as assessed by boxplot. Data were normally distributed for the 18–34, 55–64, 65+, and Prefer not to say age groups as assessed by the Shapiro-Wilk test ($p > .05$). The age groups 35–44 and 45–54 were further assessed using Q-Q plots. Both Q-Q plots for each age group showed that the data were approximately normally distributed. Combining the visual and statistical evidence, it was assumed that both groups' data were approximately normally distributed, albeit with some minor deviations. The one-way ANOVA is considered robust to violations of normality, meaning that some violation of this assumption can still produce valid results (Schmider et al., 2010). There was homogeneity of variances, as assessed by Levene's test of homogeneity of variances ($p =$

.073). Data are presented as mean \pm standard deviation. The TWRBSs increased from 65+ (35.5 \pm 23.5), to 55–64 (45.2 \pm 20.5), to 18–34 (45.8 \pm 19.4), to 35–44 (48.6 \pm 21.1), to 45–54 (49.8 \pm 24.0), to Prefer not to say (73.0 \pm 13.7). The TWRBSs were statistically significant between different age groups, $F(5, 506) = 3.967, p = .002, \eta^2 = .038, 95\% \text{ CI } [.006, .067]$ (see Tables 9 and 10).

Table 9

Analysis of Variance of Participants' Age on TWRBSs

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	9217.788	5	1843.558	3.967	.002
Within Groups	235163.191	506	464.749		
Total	244380.979	511			

Table 10

Tukey HSD Comparisons for Participants' Age and TWRBSs

(I) Age	(J) Age	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					LB	UB
18 - 34	35 - 44	-2.74399	2.77485	.921	-10.6819	5.1940
	45 - 54	-3.97135	2.80613	.718	-11.9988	4.0561
	55 - 64	.61551	3.11587	1.000	-8.2980	9.5290
	65+	10.28322	5.17034	.350	-4.5074	25.0739
	5	-27.13174*	8.42581	.017	-51.2352	-3.0282
35 - 44	18 - 34	2.74399	2.77485	.921	-5.1940	10.6819
	45 - 54	-1.22736	2.52413	.997	-8.4481	5.9933
	55 - 64	3.35950	2.86452	.850	-4.8350	11.5540
	65+	13.02721	5.02287	.101	-1.3416	27.3960
	5	-24.38776*	8.33613	.042	-48.2347	-.5408
45 - 54	18 - 34	3.97135	2.80613	.718	-4.0561	11.9988
	35 - 44	1.22736	2.52413	.997	-5.9933	8.4481
	55 - 64	4.58686	2.89483	.609	-3.6943	12.8680
	65+	14.25458	5.04022	.055	-.1639	28.6730
	5	-23.16039	8.34660	.063	-47.0373	.7165
55 - 64	18 - 34	-.61551	3.11587	1.000	-9.5290	8.2980
	35 - 44	-3.35950	2.86452	.850	-11.5540	4.8350
	45 - 54	-4.58686	2.89483	.609	-12.8680	3.6943
	65+	9.66771	5.21901	.433	-5.2622	24.5976
	5	-27.74725*	8.45576	.014	-51.9364	-3.5581

(I) Age	(J) Age	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					LB	UB
65+	18 - 34	-10.28322	5.17034	.350	-25.0739	4.5074
	35 - 44	-13.02721	5.02287	.101	-27.3960	1.3416
	45 - 54	-14.25458	5.04022	.055	-28.6730	.1639
	55 - 64	-9.66771	5.21901	.433	-24.5976	5.2622
	5	-37.41497*	9.40870	.001	-64.3302	-10.4997
5	18 - 34	27.13174*	8.42581	.017	3.0282	51.2352
	35 - 44	24.38776*	8.33613	.042	.5408	48.2347
	45 - 54	23.16039	8.34660	.063	-.7165	47.0373
	55 - 64	27.74725*	8.45576	.014	3.5581	51.9364
	65+	37.41497*	9.40870	.001	10.4997	64.3302

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level. 5 = Prefer not to say; LB = Lower Bound; UB = Upper Bound.

This small effect size indicated that the independent variable has a modest effect on the dependent variable (Cohen, 1988). Tukey post hoc analysis revealed that the increase from Prefer not to say to 18–34 (27.13, 95% CI [3.03, 51.24]) was statistically significant ($p = .017$), the increase from Prefer not to say to 35–44 (24.39, 95% CI [.54, 48.23]) was statistically significant ($p = 0.42$), the increase from Prefer not to say to 55–64 (27.75, 95% CI [3.56, 51.94]) was statistically significant ($p = .014$), and the increase from Prefer not to say to 65+ (37.41, 95% CI [10.50 to 64.33]) was statistically significant ($p = .001$), but no other group differences were statistically significant (see Table 10). Because of this significance, we can reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. However, the small sample size of the Prefer not to say group ($n = 7$) may limit statistical power and the reliability of comparisons involving this group.

Race

Race groups were presented to respondents as follows: American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Black/African American, Hispanic, Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, White, People of all other racial/ethnic groups, and Prefer not to say. There were no respondents who identified as

Hawaiian/Pacific Islander. Due to the low number of respondents that identified as American Indian/Alaska Native ($n = 1$) and Asian ($n = 1$), these TWRBSs were averaged in with the People of all other racial/ethnic groups category resulting in five final categories. The null hypothesis and research hypothesis regarding race and the TWRBSs were:

H₀: There is no statistically significant relationship between academic librarians' race and their self-identification of work-related burnout.

H₁: There is a statistically significant relationship between academic librarians' race and their self-identification of work-related burnout.

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine if the TWRBSs were different for academic librarians grouped by race. Participants were classified into five groups: Black/African American ($n = 27$), Hispanic ($n = 8$), White ($n = 463$), People of all other racial/ethnic groups ($n = 5$), and Prefer not to say ($n = 9$). Upon assessment by boxplot, it was determined that there were five outliers present. Therefore, for comparison, two one-way ANOVAs were conducted, one that included outliers (see Table 11) and one that did not (see Table 12).

The first one-way ANOVA with outliers presented normally distributed TWRBSs, as assessed by Shapiro-Wilk's test for the following groups: Black/African American, Hispanic, People of all other racial/ethnic groups, and Prefer not to say. The Q-Q plot for the White group showed data were approximately normally distributed with some minor deviations at both ends. The one-way ANOVA is considered robust to violations of normality, meaning that some violation of this assumption can still produce valid results. Levene's test for homogeneity of variances indicated that the variances were homogeneous across all race groups ($p = .326$).

Data are presented as mean \pm standard deviation. The TWRBSs increased from Black/African American (43.65 ± 19.57), to Hispanic (44.64 ± 14.91), to White (47.59 ± 21.94),

to Prefer not to say (55.95 ± 28.40), to People of all other racial/ethnic groups (57.14 ± 24.87). However, the differences between these racial/ethnic groups were not statistically significant, $F(4, 507) = 0.822, p = .512$. Because the group means were not statistically significant ($p > .05$), we cannot reject the null hypothesis, and we cannot accept the research hypothesis.

The second one-way ANOVA was performed after the initial outliers were removed. A one-way Welch ANOVA was conducted to determine if the TWRBSs were different for academic librarians grouped by race. Participants were classified into five groups: Black/African American ($n = 23$), Hispanic ($n = 8$), White ($n = 463$), People of all other racial/ethnic groups ($n = 5$), and Prefer not to say ($n = 6$). Upon inspection of boxplot, two more outliers presented and were also removed. The data without outliers presented normally distributed TWRBSs, as assessed by Shapiro-Wilk's test for the following groups: Black/African American, Hispanic, People of all other racial/ethnic groups, and Prefer not to say. The Q-Q plot for the White group was shown to be approximately normally distributed with some minor deviations at both ends. The one-way ANOVA is considered robust to violations of normality, meaning that some violation of this assumption can still produce valid results; however, two types of ANOVA tests were performed to determine consistency of the findings (Schmider et al., 2010). There was heterogeneity of variances, as assessed by Levene's test of homogeneity of variances ($p = .007$).

Data are presented as mean \pm standard deviation. TWRBSs increased from Hispanic (44.64 ± 13.21), to White (47.59 ± 21.94), to Black/African American (49.84 ± 13.21), to People of all other racial/ethnic groups (57.14 ± 24.87), to Prefer not to say (63.70 ± 11.61). The results of the analysis indicated that there were no statistically significant differences in TWRBSs between the groups, Welch's $F(4,13.287) = 2.705, p = .076$ (see Table 13). Both tests, with and without outliers, confirmed that there were no statistically significant differences in TWRBSs

between race groups. Because the group means were not statistically significantly different ($p > .05$), we cannot reject the null hypothesis, and we cannot accept the alternative hypothesis.

Table 11

Analysis of Variance of Participants' Race with Outliers on TWRBSs

	Sum of Squares	<i>df</i>	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	Sig.
Between Groups	1573.957	4	393.489	.822	.512
Within Groups	242807.022	507	478.909		
Total	244380.979	511			

Table 12

Analysis of Variance of Participants' Race No Outliers on TWRBSs

	Sum of Squares	<i>df</i>	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	Sig.
Between Groups	2140.411	4	535.103	1.159	.328
Within Groups	230908.083	500	461.816		
Total	233048.495	504			

Table 13

Robust Tests of Equality of Means

	Statistic ^a	<i>df1</i>	<i>df2</i>	Sig.
Welch	2.705	4	13.287	.076

Note. a. Asymptotically F distributed.

Time in Current Position

Time in current position groups were presented to respondents in five groups: Less than 1 year, 1–5 years, 6–10 years, 11–19 years, 20+ years. The null hypothesis and research hypothesis regarding time in current position and the TWRBSs were the following:

H₀: There is no statistically significant relationship between the years academic librarians have been in their current position and their self-identification of work-related burnout.

H₁: There is a statistically significant relationship between the years academic librarians have been in their current position and their self-identification of work-related burnout.

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine if the TWRBSs were different for academic librarians grouped by the number of years they had held their current position. Participants were classified into five groups: less than 1 year ($n = 47$), 1–5 years ($n = 175$), 6–10 years ($n = 115$), 11–19 years ($n = 95$), and 20+ years ($n = 80$). There were no outliers as assessed by boxplot. Data were normally distributed for all groups as assessed by the Shapiro-Wilk test ($p > .05$) except for the 1–5 years group. Upon inspection of the 1–5 years group Q-Q plot, it was determined that this group also had approximately normally distributed data. There was homogeneity of variances, as assessed by Levene’s test of homogeneity of variances ($p = .268$). Data are presented as mean \pm standard deviation. The TWRBSs increased from Less than 1 year (32.90 ± 18.91), to 20+ years (45.67 ± 23.49), to 1–5 years (47.51 ± 18.91), to 6–10 years (50.00 ± 22.49), to 11–19 years (53.61 to 20.36). The differences in the TWRBSs were statistically significantly between these groups $F(4, 507) = 8.021, p < .001, \eta^2 = .060, 95\% \text{ CI } [.021, .097]$ (see Table 14).

Table 14

Analysis of Variance of Time in Current Position on TWRBSs

	Sum of Squares	<i>df</i>	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	Sig.
Between Groups	14544.271	4	3636.068	8.021	<.001
Within Groups	229836.708	507	453.327		
Total	244380.979	511			

The eta-squared effect size estimate revealed that approximately 6.0% of the variance in TWRBSs was associated with the group differences indicating that the overall impact is

relatively small. Tukey post hoc analysis revealed that the increase from Less than 1 year to 1–5 years (14.60, 95% CI [5.03, 24.18]) was statistically significant ($p < .001$), the increase from

Table 15

Tukey HSD Comparisons for Time in Current Position and TWRBSs

(I) Time in Current Position	(J) Time in Current Position	Mean Difference			95% Confidence Interval	
		(I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Less than 1 year	1 – 5 Years	-14.60747*	3.49796	<.001	-24.1835	-5.0314
	6 – 10 Years	-17.09726*	3.68609	<.001	-27.1884	-7.0062
	11 – 19 Years	-20.70629*	3.79699	<.001	-31.1010	-10.3116
	20+ Years	-12.76691*	3.91303	.010	-23.4793	-2.0545
1 – 5 Years	Less than 1 Year	14.60747*	3.49796	<.001	5.0314	24.1835
	6 – 10 Years	-2.48980	2.55586	.867	-9.4868	4.5072
	11 – 19 Years	-6.09882	2.71336	.164	-13.5270	1.3293
	20+ Years	1.84056	2.87350	.968	-6.0260	9.7071
6 – 10 Years	Less than 1 Year	17.09726*	3.68609	<.001	7.0062	27.1884
	1 – 5 Years	2.48980	2.55586	.867	-4.5072	9.4868
	11 – 19 Years	-3.60902	2.95192	.738	-11.6903	4.4722
	20+ Years	4.33036	3.09977	.630	-4.1556	12.8163
11 – 19 Years	Less than 1 Year	20.70629*	3.79699	<.001	10.3116	31.1010
	1 – 5 Years	6.09882	2.71336	.164	-1.3293	13.5270
	6 – 10 Years	3.60902	2.95192	.738	-4.4722	11.6903
	20+ Years	7.93938	3.23086	.102	-.9055	16.7842
20+ Years	Less than 1 Year	12.76691*	3.91303	.010	2.0545	23.4793
	1 – 5 Years	-1.84056	2.87350	.968	-9.7071	6.0260
	6 – 10 Years	-4.33036	3.09977	.630	-12.8163	4.1556
	11 – 19 Years	-7.93938	3.23086	.102	-16.7842	.9055

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Less than 1 year to 6–10 years (17.10, 95% CI [7.00, 27.19]) was statistically significant ($p < .001$), the increase from Less than 1 year to 11–19 years (20.71, 95% CI [10.31, 31.10]) was statistically significant ($p < .001$), and the increase from Less than 1 year to 20+ years (12.77, 95% CI [2.05 to 23.48]) was statistically significant ($p = .010$). No other group differences were statistically significant (see Table 15). Because of this significance, we can reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis.

Turnover Intention

Respondents indicated turnover intention by answering the following question with either yes or no, “Have you considered leaving your current position in an academic library due to work-related burnout?” The null hypothesis and research hypothesis regarding turnover intentions and the TWRBSs were as follows:

H₀: There are no statistically significant relationships between academic librarians’ turnover intentions and their self-identification of work-related burnout.

H₁: There are statistically significant relationships between academic librarians’ turnover intentions and their self-identification of work-related burnout.

An independent samples t-test was used to evaluate the relationship between turnover intentions and the TWRBSs. Of the 512 respondents, 241 indicated that they had not considered leaving their current position in an academic library due to work-related burnout while 271 indicated that they had considered leaving their current position in an academic library due to work-related burnout. A Welch t-test was run to determine if there were differences in TWRBSs depending on turnover intentions due to the assumption of homogeneity of variances being violated, as assessed by Levene’s test for equality of variances ($p = .015$). Upon boxplot inspection, one outlier was discovered. Because it represented valid data and was not a result of a data entry error, it was kept. A review of Q-Q plots showed that the data were approximately normally distributed with only minor deviations. For the 241 academic librarians who had not considered leaving their current position, the average TWRBS was lower ($M = 34.02$, $SD = 16.40$). For the 271 academic librarians who had considered leaving their current position, the average TWRBS was higher ($M = 59.62$, $SD = 18.88$). The TWRBSs for academic librarians not considering leaving their current position due to work-related burnout was -25.60 , 95% CI $[-28.66, -22.53]$

lower than those who answered the question affirmatively (see Table 16). There was a statistically significant difference in TWRBSs between these groups, $t(509.73) = -16.41, p < .001$. The calculated Cohen's d value was -1.441 , indicating a very large effect size. This negative value demonstrated that the mean TWRBS for academic librarians with no intention towards leaving their current position was significantly lower than the mean TWRBS for academic librarians who have considered leaving their current position. There was a statistically significant difference between means ($p < .05$), and therefore, we can reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis.

Table 16

Independent Samples Test of Turnover Intentions on TWRBSs

TWRBS	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
	<i>F</i>	Sig.	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	p**	Mean Diff.	St. Error Diff.	Lower Limit	Upper Limit
EVA	5.972	.015	-16.280	510	<.001	-25.60	1.57	-28.68	-22.51
EVNA			-16.414	509.73	<.001	-25.60	1.56	-28.66	-22.53

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level. Approximate values listed. EVA = Equal

Variances Assumed; EVNA = Equal Variances Not Assumed; Diff = Difference.

**Two-Tailed significance.

Research Question 2

RQ2 is stated as follows: Is there a relationship between the perception of library leadership practices of academic librarians in the southeastern region of the United States as measured by the LPI: Observer and the self-identification of work-related burnout as measured by the total work-related burnout subscale? To address Research Question 2, data from the LPI: Observer and the calculated TWRBSs were used (see Tables 17 and 18). The average LPI:

Observer score for the southeastern states was 6.36 (see Table 17). Academic librarians in Arkansas presented the highest LPI: Observer average ($M = 7.57$) and Missouri's academic librarians presented the lowest ($M = 5.56$). The null hypothesis and research hypothesis regarding library leadership practices and TWRBSs were the following:

H₀: There is no statistically significant relationship between the perception of library leadership practices of academic librarians in the southeastern region of the United States and their self-identification of work-related burnout.

H₁: There is a statistically significant relationship between the perception of library leadership practices of academic librarians in the southeastern region of the United States and their self-identification of work-related burnout.

Table 17

Average LPI: Observer Composite Scores by State

State	Mean LPI: Observer Composite Score	<i>SD</i>
Alabama	6.20	2.74
Arkansas	7.57	1.79
Florida	6.54	2.13
Georgia	6.71	2.22
Kentucky	6.15	1.99
Louisiana	5.88	2.43
Mississippi	4.82	2.30
Missouri	5.56	2.41
North Carolina	6.53	2.13
South Carolina	6.32	2.60
Tennessee	6.64	2.14
Virginia	6.18	2.20
West Virginia	6.50	2.45
Southeastern Region	6.36	2.24

Table 18*Average LPI: Observer Composite Scores by Demographic Groups*

Demographic Category	Groups	<i>n</i> (%)	Mean LPI: Observer Score	<i>SD</i>
Sex	Male	89 (17.38%)	6.60	2.18
	Female	405(79.10%)	6.35	2.27
	Prefer not to say	18 (3.52%)	5.56	1.84
Age	18 – 34 years	101 (19.73%)	6.52	2.10
	35 – 44 years	150 (29.30%)	6.38	2.14
	45 – 54 years	142 (27.73%)	6.13	2.36
	55 – 64 years	91 (17.97%)	6.48	2.31
	65+ years	21 (4.10%)	6.81	2.58
	Prefer not to say	7 (1.37%)	5.74	2.31
	Race	African American	27 (5.27%)	6.47
	Hispanic	8 (1.56%)	6.67	2.44
	White	463 (90.43%)	6.37	2.24
	All other groups	5 (0.98%)	6.50	1.40
	Prefer not to say	9 (1.76%)	5.47	2.31
Years in Current Position	Less than 1 year	47 (9.18%)	7.40	1.87
	1 – 5 years	175 (34.18%)	6.60	2.03
	6 – 10 years	115 (2.46%)	6.08	2.40
	11 – 19 years	95 (18.55%)	6.03	2.29
	20+ years	80 (15.63%)	6.05	2.39
Turnover Intention	No	241 (47.07%)	7.23	1.98
	Yes	271 (52.93%)	5.60	2.18

The average LPI: Observer scores are presented by demographic groups in Table 18. On average, males scored their leadership higher ($M = 6.60$) than females ($M = 6.35$) and the Prefer not to say group ($M = 5.56$). The LPI: Observer averages amongst the age groups were similar with the exception of the Prefer not to say group that scored their leadership much lower ($M = 5.47$). For time in current position, the respondents who identified as holding their positions less than 1 year scored their leadership the highest ($M = 7.40$). Finally, the turnover intention groups' LPI: Observer averages were quite different. Those who had not considered leaving their current position due to work-related burnout scored their leadership much higher ($M = 7.23$) than those who had considered leaving their current position due to work-related burnout ($M = 5.60$) further

confirming the connection between leadership practices, work-related burnout, and attrition first noted in Question 2 analyses.

Question Analyses

On the LPI: Observer, six questions were used to assess each of the five exemplary leadership practices. Each item was assessed using a 10-point Likert Scale. Enable Others to Act ($M = 7.05$) averaged the highest, followed by Encourage the Heart ($M = 6.53$), Model the Way ($M = 6.22$), Challenge the Process ($M = 6.10$), and Inspire a Shared Vision ($M = 5.92$). Analysis of the mean of the questions provides further insight into what leadership practices are being observed within academic libraries in the Southeast.

Enable Others to Act was the highest scored leadership practice of the five ($M = 7.05$). The item analysis for Enable Others to Act is presented in Table 19. The highest item average within this group and for the entire LPI: Observer was Question 14: “Treats others with dignity and respect ($M = 7.91$). This indicated that academic librarians within the Southeast observe their leadership engaging in this leadership practice most often. Question 19: “Involves people in the decisions that directly impact their job performance” received the lowest average for this item ($M = 6.12$). Although above average, this scoring may denote that shared governance is not a top priority for academic library leadership.

The leadership practice averaging the second highest average score was Encourage the Heart ($M = 6.53$). The item analysis for Encourage the Heart is presented in Table 20. The highest item average within this group was Question 5: “Praises people for a job well done” ($M = 7.14$) demonstrating that library leadership in the southeastern states are providing some type of verbal recognition for their followers. Question 25: “Tells stories of encouragement about the

good work of others” received the lowest average ($M = 6.05$) but was scored above average, demonstrating that this leadership practice is occurring within academic libraries.

Table 19

Enables Others to Act Item Averages

Question	Mean	SD	Question Text
Q4:	6.86	2.71	Develops cooperative relationships among the people he/she works with.
Q9:	6.68	2.65	Actively listens to diverse points of view.
Q14:	7.91	2.38	Treats others with dignity and respect.
Q19:	6.12	2.87	Involves people in the decisions that directly impact their job performance.
Q24:	7.89	2.26	Gives people a great deal of freedom and choice in deciding how to do their work.
Q29:	6.83	2.70	Ensures that people grow in their jobs by learning new skills and developing them.
Total:	7.05	0.71	

Note. Each statement was scored using a Likert scale from 0 to 10. The scale anchors are: (1)

Almost never do what is described in the statement; (2) Rarely; (3) Seldom; (4) Once in a while; (5) Occasionally; (6) Sometimes; (7) Fairly Often; (8) Usually; (9) Very Frequently; and (10) Almost always do what is described in the statement.

Table 20

Encourage the Heart Item Averages

Question	Mean	SD	Question Text
Q5:	7.14	2.56	Praises people for a job well done.
Q10:	6.47	2.77	Makes it a point to let people know about his/her confidence in their abilities.
Q15:	6.77	2.67	Makes sure that people are creatively recognized for their contributions to the success of our projects.
Q20:	6.38	2.89	Publicly recognizes people who exemplify commitment to shared values.
Q25:	6.05	2.76	Tells stories of encouragement about the good work of others.
Q30:	6.37	2.89	Gets personally involved in recognizing people and celebrating accomplishments.
Total:	6.53	0.38	

Note. Each statement was scored using a Likert scale from 0 to 10. The scale anchors are: (1) Almost never do what is described in the statement; (2) Rarely; (3) Seldom; (4) Once in a while; (5) Occasionally; (6) Sometimes; (7) Fairly Often; (8) Usually; (9) Very Frequently; and (10) Almost always do what is described in the statement.

Model the Way presented the third highest average on the LPI: Observer portion of the initial survey ($M = 6.22$). The item analysis for Model the Way is presented in Table 21. The highest item average within this group was Question 11: “Follows through on the promises and commitments that he/she makes” ($M = 7.24$) establishing that most academic librarian leadership are keeping their word to their followers. Question 16: “Asks for feedback on how his/her actions affect other people’s performance” received the lowest average within this group and within the entire LPI: Observer ($M = 4.88$). This low score falls below average and may suggest that many within academic library leadership are uninterested in soliciting and receiving their followers’ opinions concerning their leadership practices and the impact they may have on their followers’ ability to execute their jobs.

Table 21

Model the Way Item Averages

Question	Mean	<i>SD</i>	Question Text
Q1:	6.68	2.55	Sets a personal example of what he/she expects of others.
Q6:	6.60	2.46	Makes certain that people adhere to the principles and standards that have been agreed upon.
Q11:	7.24	2.32	Follows through on the promises and commitments that he/she makes.
Q16:	4.88	3.01	Asks for feedback on how his/her actions affect other people’s performance.
Q21:	6.23	2.72	Builds consensus around a common set of values for running our organization.
Q26:	5.69	2.90	Is clear about his/her philosophy of leadership.
Total:	6.22	0.83	

Note. Each statement was scored using a Likert scale from 0 to 10. There are 10 scale anchors: (1) Almost never do what is described in the statement; (2) Rarely; (3) Seldom; (4) Once in a while; (5) Occasionally; (6) Sometimes; (7) Fairly Often; (8) Usually; (9) Very Frequently; and (10) Almost always do what is described in the statement.

Challenge the Process presented the fourth highest average on the LPI: Observer portion of the initial survey ($M = 6.10$). The item analysis for Challenge the Process is presented in Table 22. The highest item average within this group was Question 28: “Takes initiative in anticipating and responding to change” ($M = 6.45$). This documented that most library leadership in the Southeast are involved in change management. Question 18: “Asks ‘What can we learn?’ when things don’t go as expected” received the lowest average within this group ($M = 5.65$). This low score may be related to the low score presenting in Model the Way. It sets forth that only some within academic library leadership are requesting feedback from their followership in an effort to improve their practices and the organization as a whole.

Table 22

Challenge the Process Item Averages

Question	Mean	SD	Question Text
Q3:	6.08	2.55	Seeks out challenging opportunities that test his/her own skills and abilities.
Q8:	6.33	2.66	Challenges people to try out new and innovative ways to do their work.
Q13:	6.19	2.73	Actively searches for innovative ways to improve what we do.
Q18:	5.65	2.90	Asks “What can we learn?” when things don’t go as expected.
Q23:	5.88	2.67	Identifies measurable milestones that keep projects moving forward.
Q28:	6.45	2.80	Takes initiative in anticipating and responding to change.
Total:	6.10	0.29	

Note. Each statement was scored using a Likert scale from 0 to 10. There are 10 scale anchors:

(1) Almost never do what is described in the statement; (2) Rarely; (3) Seldom; (4) Once in a

while; (5) Occasionally; (6) Sometimes; (7) Fairly Often; (8) Usually; (9) Very Frequently; and (10) Almost always do what is described in the statement.

The library leadership practice receiving the lowest average score was Inspire a Shared Vision ($M = 5.93$). The item analysis for Inspire a Shared Vision is presented in Table 23. The highest item average within this group was Question 2: “Talks about future trends that will influence how our work gets done” ($M = 6.34$) establishing that over half of library leadership in the Southeast are attempting to stay current and promote library trends impacting their followers. Question 17: “Shows others how their long-term interest can be realized by enlisting in a common vision” scored the lowest average within this group ($M = 5.33$).

Table 23

Inspire a Shared Vision Item Averages

Question	Mean	SD	Question Text
Q2:	6.34	2.47	Talks about future trends that will influence how our work gets done.
Q7:	5.68	2.81	Describes a compelling image of what our future could be like.
Q12:	5.87	2.80	Appeals to others to share an exciting dream of the future.
Q17:	5.33	2.84	Shows others how their long-term interests can be realized by enlisting in a common vision.
Q22:	6.27	2.76	Paints the “big picture” of what we aspire to accomplish.
Q27:	6.06	2.90	Speaks with genuine conviction about the higher meaning and purpose of our work.
Total:	5.93	0.38	

Note. Each statement was scored using a Likert scale from 0 to 10. The scale anchors are: (1)

Almost never do what is described in the statement; (2) Rarely; (3) Seldom; (4) Once in a while;

(5) Occasionally; (6) Sometimes; (7) Fairly Often; (8) Usually; (9) Very Frequently; and (10)

Almost always do what is described in the statement.

Total Work-Related Burnout Score and LPI: Observer Comparison

The average TWRBS for the southeastern region was 47.57 and the average LPI: Observer score for the southeastern region was 6.36 (see Table 24). To assess if a relationship

between TWRBSs and LPI: Observer scores existed, a scatterplot was created (see Figure 5). This scatterplot indicated a negative relationship. As LPI: Observer composite scores increased, TWRBSs decreased. This relationship appeared to be linear, but with considerable scatter. Outliers were present, especially at the higher TWRBS values. The R^2 value was presented at 0.151 indicating that approximately 15.1% of the variance in TWRBSs can be explained by the LPI: Observer composite score.

Table 24

TWRBSs and LPI: Observer Scores by State

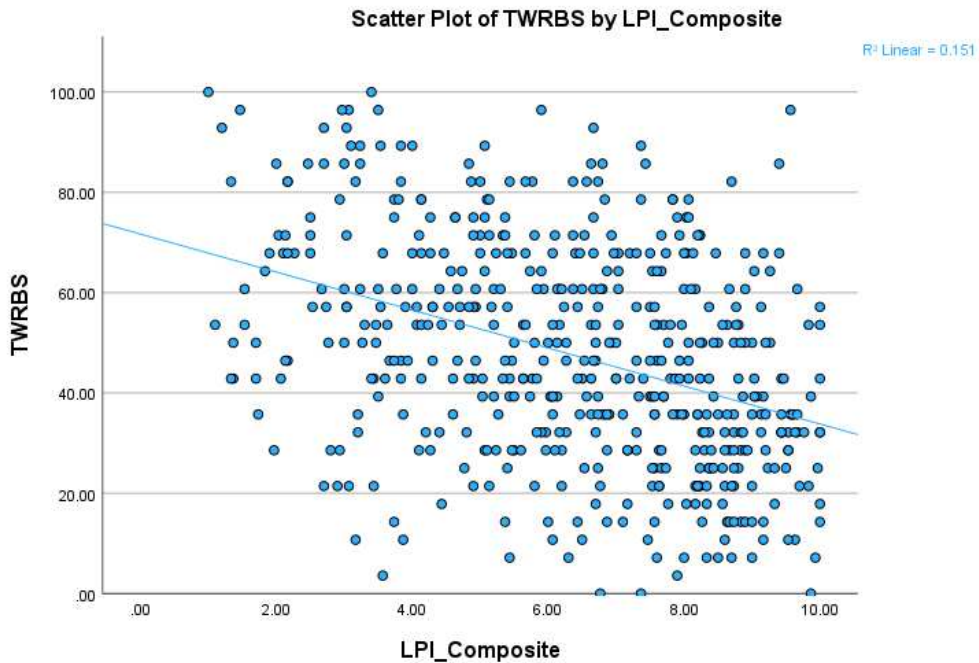
State	TWRBS	LPI
Alabama	54.10	6.20
Arkansas	43.83	7.57
Florida	51.74	6.54
Georgia	47.10	6.71
Kentucky	43.43	6.15
Louisiana	54.51	5.88
Mississippi	41.67	4.82
Missouri	47.80	5.56
North Carolina	49.00	6.53
South Carolina	46.88	6.32
Tennessee	42.86	6.64
Virginia	45.97	6.18
West Virginia	40.31	6.50
Southeastern Region	47.57	6.36

After considering the scatterplot, a hierarchical multiple regression was conducted examining the relationship between the LPI: Observer composite scores and TWRBSs. Three models were tested: a linear model, a quadratic model, and a cubic model (see Table 25). The linear model was statistically significant, $F(1, 510) = 90.578, p < .001, R^2 = .151$. This model accounted for 15.1% of the variance in TWRBSs. The addition of a quadratic term in the second model did not significantly improve the model fit, $\Delta R^2 = .001, F(1, 509) = 0.564, p = .453$.

Similarly, the addition of a cubic term in the third model also did not significantly improve the model fit, $\Delta R^2 = .000$, $F(1, 508) = 0.060$, $p = .806$.

Figure 5

Scatter Plot of TWRBSs and LPI Composite Scores



The final predictive equation based on the cubic model was $Y = 48.321 - 3.728X - 0.162X^2 - 0.018X^3$ (see Table 26). The final model statistics were $R = .390$, $R^2 = .152$, adjusted $R^2 = .147$. The minimal changes in R^2 across the three models, coupled with the non-significant F change statistics for the quadratic and cubic terms, suggested that the relationship between LPI: Observer composite scores and TWRBSs was best described as linear rather than curvilinear. Adjusted R Square decreased slightly with each added term, suggesting that the additional complexity was not justified by the minimal increase. These results indicated that while there is a significant linear relationship between the LPI: Observer composite scores

Table 25*ANOVA Results*

Model	ANOVA ^a				
	Sum of Squares	<i>df</i>	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	Sig.
1. Regression	36856.915	1	36856.915	90.578	<.001 ^b
Residual	207524.064	510	406.910		
Total	244380.979	511			
2. Regression	37086.497	2	18543.248	45.532	<.001 ^c
Residual	207294.482	509	407.258		
Total	244380.979	511			
3. Regression	37111.034	3	12370.345	30.319	<.001 ^c
Residual	207269.945	508	408.012		
Total	244380.979	511			

Note. a. Dependent Variable: TWRBS, b. Predictors: (Constant), LPI Mean Center, c. Predictors:

(Constant), LPI Mean Center, LPI Mean Center Squared, d. Predictors: (Constant), LPI Mean

Center, LPI Mean Center Squared, LPI Mean Center Cubed

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 26*Coefficients*

Model	Coefficients ^a				
	Unstandardized B	Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	<i>t</i>	Sig.
1. (Constant)	47.587	.891		53.379	<.001
LPI Mean Center	-3.787	.398	-.388	-9.517	
2. (Constant)	48.243	1.249		38.635	<.001
LPI Mean Center	-3.900	.425	-.400	-9.166	
LPI Mean Center Squared	-1.31	.174	-.033	-.751	
3. (Constant)	48.321	1.290		37.455	<.001
LPI Mean Center	-3.728	.821	-.382	-4.541	
LPI Mean Center Squared	-.162	.216	-.041	-.750	
LPI Mean Center Cubed	-.018	.074	-.024	-.245	

Note. a. Dependent variable: TWRBS

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

and TWRBSs, it is relatively weak, with LPI: Observer composite scores explaining only about 15% of the variance in TWRBSs. This suggested that other factors not included in this analysis may play a substantial role in predicting TWRBSs. However, because of this significance, we can reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis confirming that there is a statistically significant relationship between the perception of library leadership practices of academic librarians in the southeastern region of the United States and their self-identification of work-related burnout.

Phase 2: Qualitative Phase

In this explanatory sequential mixed-methods study, the qualitative phase was informed by the results of the quantitative analysis from Phase I. The intent was for the findings and generated subthemes of the qualitative analysis to provide further explanation and deeper interpretation of the quantitative results, as well as to triangulate the findings. Two data sets collected at different times provided the data for Phase II. The qualitative data analyses used an inductive/deductive hybrid thematic analysis approach investigating patterns and themes present within the respondents' responses concerning ways academic librarian leadership practices contributed to work-related burnout and ways academic librarian leadership practices mitigated work-related burnout. The inductive/deductive hybrid thematic analysis when used in conjunction with quantitative work in a mixed methods study has been shown to be valuable as a researcher explores complex problems requiring both inductive approaches to code generation and the deductive application of themes that have been derived from an existing framework (Proudfoot, 2023).

To proactively address potential researcher bias, a rigorous and iterative coding approach was employed throughout the analysis. This process began with a deep familiarity with the data,

achieved by thoroughly reading all open-ended responses and interviewee transcripts multiple times. This thorough immersion into the raw data was critical for grounding interpretations and minimizing the influence of prior assumptions. Furthermore, continuous memoing served as a key strategy, actively documenting emerging insights and methodological decisions. This practice fostered reflexivity and reduced potential biases by consistently scrutinizing interpretations against the raw data.

The qualitative data were analyzed through a robust, multi-stage process that combined inductive coding with deductive coding using the Kouzes and Posner leadership framework. This approach facilitated a rich, nuanced understanding of library leadership practices impacting work-related burnout in academic librarians. The initial phase employed an inductive coding approach, a ground-up method where codes were developed directly from respondents' answers to the open-ended questions on the Academic Librarian Leadership and Burnout Survey, ensuring the narrative emerged organically from the data. Line-by-line coding was conducted, meticulously assigning initial codes to individual text segments. As patterns emerged, these initial codes were systematically categorized into clusters, leading to the naming and defining of emergent subthemes. This cyclical process involved constant comparison and refinement, often requiring re-engagement with the raw data to ensure the subthemes accurately reflected the respondents' experiences rather than any preconceived notions.

After completing this inductive coding process and establishing the final sets of codes and emergent subthemes, the analysis shifted to a deductive coding approach. This allowed for interpretation of the findings through the established lens of Kouzes and Posner's Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership: Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart. The theoretical tenets of each of these leadership

practices were thoroughly reviewed. Then, each previously developed code and its associated emergent subtheme were carefully assessed to determine which of Kouzes and Posner's five practices it primarily reflected or aligned with. This continuous cross-referencing and refinement ensured the deductive placement of codes and subthemes was conceptually sound, providing a structured interpretation of how specific library leadership behaviors impacted work-related burnout within the established theoretical framework.

Research Question 3

RQ3 states the following: What are the experiences of academic librarians in the southeastern region of the United States concerning the impact library leadership practices have on work-related burnout? The qualitative data collected and analyzed first were from two open-ended questions found on the Academic Librarian Leadership and Burnout Survey. Later, 17 semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants from Phase I. Potential interviewees from the list of email addresses collected during Phase I were systematically selected to receive an interview solicitation. However, the solicitation included the phrase, "if you have experienced work-related burnout in your current position as an academic librarian," making it a purposive sampling.

Open-Ended Questions. Microsoft Excel was used to organize and manage the data for Phase II from the Academic Librarian Leadership and Burnout Survey. The qualitative data from the two open-ended questions were downloaded into an Excel spreadsheet and then stored in a password-protected account. Inductive coding was used to develop codes directly from the responses. (Ary et al., 2019). This allowed the narrative to emerge from the data. The first half of the survey answers were read multiple times, and codes were generated based on the information. This same sample was read through again and the generated codes were applied.

The second half of the data was read, and the established codes were applied. Any codes that did not match were noted, and new codes were created. During the rereading of all data, all responses were recoded as needed. Originally, 48 codes were assigned to Question 1: Describe library leadership practices you feel would contribute to work-related burnout in academic libraries, and 48 codes were initially assigned to Question 2: Describe library leadership practices you feel would mitigate work-related burnout in academic libraries. Upon further analysis of Question 1, subcodes were identified and data reorganized, resulting in a final total of 37 codes. Further analysis and reorganization of Question 2 data resulted in a final total of 41 codes. All data were then recoded to reflect the final codes. This process of coding allowed for the generation of several emergent subthemes (see Table 27). The uncovering of these subthemes presented nuanced patterns within the academic librarians' responses, illuminated meaningful relationship between previously isolated codes, and highlighted contextual factors that influenced how these experiences manifested within the academic library.

Table 27

Summary of Subthemes from Open-Ended Responses

Open-Ended Question 1	Open-Ended Question 2
Negative Leadership Behaviors	Positive Leadership Behaviors
Communication Deficiencies	Good Communication
Restricted Autonomy	Autonomy
Inadequate Follower Support	Follower Support
Problematic Governance Structures	Environmental Factors

To better understand academic librarians' experiences with burnout through the lens of Kouzes and Posner's framework, deductive coding was used to align the codes with each of the five traits of exemplary leadership. Codes reflecting the major tenets of each leadership practice were categorized under their respective practice. For example, many respondents mentioned autonomy as something that impacts work-related burnout in the academic library. Therefore,

autonomy and lack of autonomy were coded and placed under the leadership trait, Enable Others to Act. Qualified leadership and unqualified leadership were also deemed as contributors to work-related burnout. Mentions of these were coded and placed under the leadership practice, Model the Way. Appendix J presents the final codes and their Kouzes and Posner’s designations in entirety. Also revealed were codes that did not fit into any of the leadership traits. These were denoted as Other (see Table 28). The discovery of these other factors impacting work-related burnout confirmed the data analyses for Research Question 2, as it was noted that the LPI: Observer composite scores accounted for approximately 15% of the variance in TWRBSs, thus suggesting that other factors not included in this analysis played a substantial role in predicting TWRBSs.

Table 28

Other Factors Contributing to Work-Related Burnout in Academic Libraries

Question 1: Describe library leadership practices you feel would contribute to work-related burnout in academic libraries.	Question 2: Describe library leadership practices you feel would mitigate work-related burnout in academic libraries.
Lack of Opportunities for Advancement	Advancement Opportunities
Lack of Resources	Appropriate Staffing
No Support from Institutional Administration	Proper Compensation
Poor Compensation	Proper Physical Environment
Poor Physical Environment	Proper Resources
Repetitiveness of Job	Proper Workloads
Short Staffed	Support from Institutional Administration
Tenure	Tenure
Work Overload	Variety of Tasks

Question 1 Coding. Analysis of Question 1 resulted in 37 final codes which included a variety of library leadership practices that academic librarians believed contributed to work-related burnout in academic libraries. The top three practices were negative leadership behaviors (20%), poor communication (8%), and micromanagement (8%). Negative leadership behaviors encompassed a wide range of behaviors (see Appendix K). Librarian comments indicated that

those in leadership were “manipulating chaos and drama among employees” (Respondent 4), “never leaving their office” (Respondent 279), and “creating a toxic work environment” (Respondent 294). Micromanaging was also noted as a leadership practice promoting work-related burnout in the academic library. Respondent 139 stated, “burnout may often be a byproduct of micromanaging practices and taking away employees’ sense of having agency.” Poor communication, cited as “ineffective communication” (Respondent 27), “unclear communication” (Respondent 45), “lack of communication” (Respondent 76), “no communication excepts with immediate reports” (Respondent 80), “little communication” (Respondent 89), or “poor communication” (Respondent 96), was also indicated as a contributor to work-related burnout.

Question 1 Subthemes. Thematic analysis of coded data for Question 1 revealed several significant subthemes concerning what leadership practices contributed to academic librarians’ work-related burnout: negative leadership behaviors, communication deficiencies, restricted autonomy, inadequate follower support, and problematic governance structures. These subthemes aligned with existing research on the topic (Del Rio et al., 2022; Fic & Albro, 2022; Kendrick, 2017; Kennedy & Garewal, 2020; McCormack & Cotter, 2013; Ortega, 2017).

The most pervasive subtheme identified was the profound impact of negative leadership behaviors on work-related burnout among academic librarians. These behaviors manifested in library leaders who created toxic work environments, manipulated staff dynamics, or even practiced avoidance, isolating themselves from their followers. Respondents specifically described library leaders who were actively “creating a culture of fear and toxicity” (Respondent 140) and “gossiping about other employees” (Respondent 215). Some participants reported experiencing “retribution in management” (Respondent 424) and leaders “taking credit for the

accomplishments of a team” (Respondent 437). The problem extended to enabling negative workplace dynamics, with reports of “passive aggressive bullying from library leadership which then encourages a workplace pattern of the same” (Respondent 268) and leaders “taking little or no action when toxic behavior of coworkers are evident” (Respondent 334). Leadership absence was another significant concern, with respondents describing leaders who were “constantly dropping the ball and absent” (Respondent 386) or “never leaving their office” (Respondent 279), stressing the detrimental effects of disengaged leadership on academic librarians’ wellbeing.

Communication issues emerged as the second most significant subtheme impacting burnout in academic libraries, evidenced by the recurrent mention of “lack of communication” throughout the dataset. This communication breakdown appeared as a direct consequence of leadership shortcomings. The data revealed a strong connection between leadership behaviors and communication patterns, with negative leadership behaviors frequently manifesting as ineffective communication and oftentimes unprofessional communication. Respondents described leadership communication problems including “failure to listen and show that they hear and understand us” (Respondent 213), “undercutting people verbally” (Respondent 210), and even “yelling at people during meetings” (Respondent 232). Leaders were also characterized as “avoiding difficult conversations” (Respondent 169) and “listening to argue instead of to hear what’s being said” (Respondent 76). Multiple codes related to leadership communication deficiencies, including unclear goals, role ambiguity, unclear expectations, and failure to provide or receive feedback were also present. They were reflected in respondents stating work-related burnout was due to a “lack of clarity or consensus about organizational goals” (Respondent 35) and failure “to articulate organizational goals” (Respondent 46). One participant emphasized that

“when leaders don’t provide strong guidance and expectations, individuals [are] left out on their own and that leads to burnout” (Respondent 94). Other manifestations included “lack of communication in regard to setting clear objectives” (Respondent 136), “expecting people to know what’s expected of them, without telling them” (Respondent 44), and “being unclear in expectations of employees” (Respondent 372). The communication deficiencies extended to feedback processes, with participants citing “not allowing for employee feedback” (Respondent 151), “not providing frequent feedback on job performance” (Respondent 169), and “not giving sufficient feedback” (Respondent 253).

Autonomy limitations constituted another prevalent subtheme within the coded data. Micromanagement practices, directly stemming from negative leadership behaviors, significantly stifled innovation and professional agency. Academic librarians repeatedly cited that their leadership prohibited them from taking risks, demonstrated inflexibility, and exhibited a fundamental mistrust in their capabilities, all of which contributed substantially to work-related burnout. Respondents expressed frustration with leaders “not supporting academic librarians who may want to try something new” (Respondent 251) and “not allowing people with master’s degrees the freedom to do work and make decisions without direct control over them” (Respondent 434). This controlling approach extended to “micromanaging how goals are set and who tracks them” (Respondent 232) and being “too controlling or rigid, saying no to new ideas” (Respondent 62). Flexibility issues were also prominent, with participants reporting leaders “being inflexible with scheduling” (Respondent 13) and “not allowing for any flexibility with how work is done” (Respondent 66). These restrictions on professional autonomy emerged as significant contributors to work-related burnout among academic librarians.

The fourth major subtheme identified was inadequate follower support, which was discovered through multiple coded elements including lack of professional development, lack of advancement opportunities, insufficient advocacy, absence of recognition for achievements, poor work-life balance support, and minimal institutional administrative backing. This systematic failure to provide necessary support structures left academic librarians feeling undervalued and overburdened, creating conditions ripe for work-related burnout development. Respondents expressed concerns about leaders “not personally congratulating people on jobs well done” (Respondent 223) and “not recognizing value of health work-life balance” (Respondent 8). Professional growth was restricted by leaders “refusing to help with lack of professional development for staff or librarians” (Respondent 119) and failing “to offer opportunities for employees to develop and move up in the library” (Respondent 125). The data also revealed a troubling pattern of inadequate advocacy, with participants citing “lack of advocacy outside the library” (Respondent 135) and “lack of advocacy for the libraries to upper university administration” (Respondent 190). This is connected to broader institutional issues, including “lack of support at the institutional level” (Respondent 63). One respondent captured this sentiment starkly: “The university administration does not care to understand the library’s purpose or how it supports the university.” Further explaining, “We are expendable until reaccreditation comes around” (Respondent 180).

Finally, governance issues emerged as a pivotal subtheme affecting academic librarian well-being. Respondents specifically noted a lack of collaboration, poor change management practices, and an absence of shared governance as direct contributors to work-related burnout. These deficiencies created environments where academic librarians felt disconnected from decision-making processes that impacted their work, further exacerbating feelings of

powerlessness and professional dissatisfaction which oftentimes led to work-related burnout. Participants expressed frustration with leaders “not including staff at all levels in decision making” (Respondent 437) and “making major decisions without asking the opinions of affected employees” (Respondent 80). This exclusionary approach led to “leadership making decisions leading to library staff having a lack of control over work and input on decisions that affect work” (Respondent 131). The hierarchical nature of decision-making was emphasized by one respondent who noted: “Heavy top-down management. Even middle management just does what the senior leadership says to do. There is no collaboration or true shared governance” (Respondent 348). The personal impact of these governance issues was captured by another participant: “I am rarely involved in discussions about timelines for when projects I end up doing are created. My labor is often volunteered without my agreement making me feel like a work horse and not a person” (Respondent 396).

The five identified subthemes from Question 1 (negative leadership behaviors, communication deficiencies, restricted autonomy, inadequate follower support, and problematic governance structures) formed an interconnected web of organizational dysfunction contributing to academic librarian work-related burnout (Fic & Albro, 2022; Griggs-Taylor & Lee, 2022; McCormack & Cotter, 2013; Weyant et al., 2021a, 2021b). Negative leadership behaviors served as the foundation, presenting directly in poor communication practices resulting in librarians being unclear about expectations and unable to receive or provide meaningful feedback. This communication breakdown enabled micromanagement and restricted autonomy, as librarians with advanced degrees found themselves powerless to innovate or exercise professional judgment. The lack of support for professional development, work-life balance, and recognition further compounded these issues, creating an environment where librarians felt undervalued

despite their expertise. Finally, governance problems completed this cycle by systematically excluding librarians from decision-making processes about their own work, transforming the previous issues from isolated library leadership failures into entrenched institutional practices. Together, these subthemes revealed how negative leadership behaviors at multiple levels created rippling effects that ultimately led to academic libraries where work-related burnout was inevitable rather than exceptional (Del Rio et al., 2022; Miles & Markgren, 2022).

Question 2 Coding. Analysis of Question 2 resulted in 41 codes which included most of the codes presented in Question 1. The top three library leadership practices expressed by academic librarians that mitigated work-related burnout included positive leadership behaviors (10%), good communication (9%), and recognition (9%). Fewer positive leadership behaviors were mentioned than negative leadership behaviors (see Appendix K). Librarian comments concerning positive leadership behaviors included, “compassionate leadership” (Respondent 3), “being trustworthy” (Respondent 68), “being active in the library daily” (Respondent 268), and “being dedicated to the library” (Respondent 326). Good communication was also listed as an important practice for mitigating work-related burnout. The following responses demonstrated its importance: Library leadership practicing “effective communication” (Respondent 24), “clear communication” (Respondent 63), and “open communication” (Respondent 91) helped alleviate work-related burnout in the academic library. Thirdly, academic librarians wanted to be recognized for their hard work and accomplishments. Librarians expressed that work-related burnout would be mitigated if library leadership were “recognizing good work” (Respondent 4), “recognizing librarian achievements” (Respondent 87), “recognizing people for their accomplishments” (Respondent 181), and “recognizing hard work” (Respondent 215). However, it was also indicated that recognition may need to be more than a simple “thank you.”

Respondent 407 stated that library leadership should be “recognizing hidden labor with more than words of affirmation.” Respondent 35 recommended “monthly emails or newsletters highlighting the success of staff and faculty.”

Question 2 Subthemes. Thematic analysis of coded data for Question 2 revealed several subthemes concerning what leadership practices mitigated academic librarians’ work-related burnout: positive leadership behaviors, good communication, follower support, autonomy, and environmental factors. Interestingly, while governance structures were less emphasized in the Question 2 responses, a new subtheme, environmental factors, emerged which was not identified in the Question 1 responses. These findings were consistent with existing research (Behrend, 2022; Del Rio et al., 2022; Fyn et al., 2019; Griggs-Taylor & Lee, 2022; Kaufman et al., 2023; McCormack & Cotter, 2013; Miles & Markgren, 2022; Townsend & Bugg, 2020; Weyant et al., 2021a).

Positive leadership behaviors emerged as a critical subtheme, being the top mitigating factor for work-related burnout in academic librarians. Importantly, the analysis showed fewer positive leadership behaviors were mentioned than the negative ones from Question 1, suggesting particular attention should be paid to library leadership improvement. This analysis revealed a strong emphasis on interpersonal qualities. For example, respondents noted the importance of sincerity (Respondent 53), empathy (Respondent 55), trustworthiness (Respondent 69), honesty (Respondent 134), kindness (Respondent 161), compassion (Respondent 275, Respondent 277) and emotional intelligence (Respondent 376). Respondents stressed the importance of fair leadership in the library, specifically regarding the division of labor, expectations, compensation (Respondents 63, 85, 122, 129, 186, 253), and the consistent application of standards (Respondent 366). Additionally, transparency was frequently identified

as a crucial leadership practice (Respondents 145, 193), with respondents citing examples such as “transparent communication” (Respondent 4), “being transparent about struggles and successes” (Respondent 5), “more transparency and openness about future changes” (Respondent 65), “transparent decision-making processes with the opportunity to ask questions” (Respondent 94), and “transparent promotion processes” (Respondent 97). Transparency lays the essential groundwork for good communication, which emerged as the next significant subtheme in the analysis.

The data revealed a strong connection between positive leadership behaviors and effective communication practices, demonstrating how these elements work together to create a supportive work environment. Multiple respondents emphasized the importance of listening (Respondents 24, 39, 86, 195, 277, 415) as a fundamental leadership quality. This skill enables library leaders to truly understand the concerns and needs of their academic librarians. Beyond just listening, effective leaders were described as those “asking how the work environment can be made better” (Respondent 39), demonstrating a proactive approach to workplace improvement. The data further highlighted that leaders should “communicate often and clearly” (Respondent 42), with “regular communication” (Respondent 289) being essential for maintaining trust and alignment within teams. Some respondents specifically noted the need for “authentic discussion about the value of libraries and librarians” (Respondent 72), suggesting that meaningful communication about professional worth contributed to positive leadership dynamics. Respondent 89 specifically requested “improved communication and connection for all workers in the library, including face-to-face contact,” expressing the importance of inclusive communication that connects library personnel across various positions. Library leaders who prioritized effective communication provided valuable support to their library teams.

Follower support emerged as another prominent subtheme in the data set, demonstrating a direct connection to positive leadership behaviors. This subtheme was substantiated by several codes: recognition, advocacy, and work-life balance support. These elements demonstrated that effective library leadership fostered a supportive environment by acknowledging achievements, championing employee needs, and prioritizing work-life balance, thereby mitigating burnout and empowering team members.

The data revealed a consistent pattern where academic librarians explicitly identified recognition as a vital leadership practice that mitigated work-related burnout. The respondents expressed that at a basic level, it involved “recognizing good work” (Respondent 5) and “regularly recognizing efforts of others” (Respondent 25). The findings indicated that recognition held special significance when established as a reliable element of academic library workplace culture. Respondent 280 emphasized the value of “consistent and communicated praise,” illustrating the fundamental connection between recognition practices and effective communication strategies. This relationship highlighted how proper acknowledgment depends on clear and regular communication to deliver its intended impact. Public acknowledgment represented another dimension of recognition that academic librarians valued. Respondent 118 specifically mentioned “celebrating employee accomplishments publicly,” suggesting that recognition gains additional power when shared with the library team or organization. This public dimension transformed individual appreciation into community celebration, strengthening organizational cohesion.

Recognizing achievements strengthens organizational cohesion, and among academic librarians, it directly enhanced morale. This is essential for combating work-related burnout, as low morale is a key precursor (Glusker et al., 2022; Kendrick, 2017; Weyant et al., 2021a).

Respondent 12's comment, "finding ways to reward folks for being overworked in order to help them feel appreciated is also an easy way to increase morale" underscored this point. This comment also suggested that acknowledgment serves as a meaningful counterbalance to the heavy workloads frequently cited by respondents and interviewees. The connection between recognition and resilience was also noted by respondents. Respondent 14 stated, "celebrating a birthday for people, emails to praise good work - it would be nice to feel valued," emphasizing the personal aspect of recognition. Perhaps most poignantly, Respondent 258 addressed the structural challenges facing the profession while proposing a practical solution: "Librarians are generally overworked and underpaid. What would mitigate the unhappiness to some extent would be a leader who appreciates her employees and is willing to acknowledge that on a regular basis, in person and sometimes at group meetings."

Advocacy was also part of the support that academic librarians frequently mentioned as reducing work-related burnout. This advocacy centered around academic library leadership advocating for the library at the administrative level. Respondents consistently emphasized the importance of leaders who championed their needs, with Respondent 2 valuing leaders "being an advocate for the people, positions, and resources we need" and Respondent 55 specifically mentioning a "strong advocate for library and library staff with university administration." The data revealed that advocacy must be active and purposeful, with Respondent 127 citing leaders who "actively advocate for a better work environment" and others requesting that library leadership begins "advocating for more staff and resources" (Respondent 246) and participates in "stronger advocacy to higher administration" (Respondent 272). The hierarchical nature of academic institutions emerged as a significant context, with Respondent 290 valuing leaders "advocating for employees when it comes to administration or expectations" and Respondent

403 directly stating that burnout mitigation requires “having a leader who advocates for the libraries at higher levels.” This introduced that upward advocacy represented a critical dimension of supportive, positive leadership practices within academic library contexts.

Work-life balance support was often mentioned as a means for curtailing work-related burnout in the academic library. The data revealed multiple forms of this support. To illustrate, this ranged from simple practices like library leaders “encouraging breaks” (Respondent 5), to deeper philosophical stances, such as library leaders “respecting that everyone needs time mentally away from the job” (Respondent 22), and notably, Respondent 112’s expectation of “recognition that work-life balance is important, that our lives matter more than our jobs.” Practical leadership work-life balance support included “ensuring that people are able to take earned time off” (Respondent 62), while some respondents emphasized the importance of leadership modeling, stating that effective leaders “exemplify healthy work-life balance” (Respondent 64) and practice it by “setting an example by demonstrating work-life balance” (Respondent 332). Respondents also expected library leaders to actively support work-life balance by “implementing practices that emphasize work-life balance” (Respondent 265). Collectively, these responses revealed that providing work-life balance support is an expected leadership responsibility, directly supporting academic librarians and curbing work-related burnout.

Autonomy was another subtheme evidenced within the qualitative data. A sense of agency empowered academic librarians, granting a sense of ownership and control over their work. This autonomy contributed to greater job satisfaction, professional growth, and a feeling of value within the library directly combatting the feelings of exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy that often accompany work-related burnout. Respondents emphasized the importance of leaders

“providing as much autonomy as feasible” (Respondent 8) and “allowing employees freedom in their work” (Respondent 13). This freedom manifested in various ways, including “giving freedom to complete work in our own way” (Respondent 39), which allowed librarians to leverage their individual strengths and preferences. This subtheme was substantiated by several codes: flexibility, no micromanagement, and trust in followers.

Flexibility in the academic library supported autonomy by providing librarians with a sense of control over their professions. This was reported in the data as flexibility in scheduling and flexibility in work modality. Many respondents specifically highlighted the benefits of “work from home days” (Respondent 9) and “more remote work options” (Respondent 99). Others emphasized the importance of “allowing hybrid work schedules when appropriate” (Respondent 62), demonstrating a desire for options that blend remote and on-site work. Furthermore, respondents stressed the importance of flexibility in scheduling. This included “making accommodations for working parents” (Respondent 11) and “allowing employees reasonable flexibility in scheduling and making it easy to request time off” (Respondent 13). Offering flexibility is a positive leadership behavior that demonstrated respect for academic librarians’ well-being by enabling them to effectively manage their work-life balance and attend to personal responsibilities without undue stress.

The data revealed that respecting academic librarians’ autonomy by avoiding micromanagement encouraged a sense of ownership and control, contributing to greater job satisfaction and reducing the risk of burnout. Respondents expressed frustration with excessive oversight and a desire for greater trust and freedom in their work. One respondent simply pleaded, “get rid of all micromanagers” (Respondent 34), while another described the need for leadership to avoid “policing or interjecting themselves into day-to-day operations that already

have effective processes in place” (Respondent 251). A leadership approach that prioritized trust and autonomy over micromanagement was crucial for mitigating burnout among academic librarians, as demonstrated by Respondent 380’s call to “avoid micromanaging from the ADs and department heads.”

Trust, inversely related to micromanaging, significantly mitigated work-related burnout among academic librarians. Respondents indicated that when library leadership demonstrated trust in their abilities and professionalism, they felt more valued, empowered, and less likely to experience work-related burnout. The responses stressed the importance of leaders “trusting employees to a large degree to get their work done” (Respondent 122) and simply “trusting people” (Respondent 42) to fulfill their responsibilities. This sentiment was reflected in respondents’ calls for “trust in library employees” (Respondent 93) and “trusting people to do their job” (Respondent 349). Furthermore, respondents emphasized the need for “creating a culture of trust and employee empowerment” (Respondent 104), where trust is not just an individual act but an organizational value. This culture of trust recognized and valued the “professionalism of others” (Respondent 364), promoting a sense of respect and mutual understanding.

A new subtheme emerging from Question 2 responses was environmental factors. Several codes supported this subtheme: proper physical environment, proper resources, appropriate staffing, proper workloads. These elements created the physical and structural context in which academic librarians operated.

A proper physical environment is crucial in academic libraries, encompassing everything from the workspace itself to the available tools and technology. This study’s respondents expressed concerns about their physical work environments, expressing the need for comfortable

and functional spaces to combat work-related burnout. One respondent suggested “offering accommodations for office space (light coverings and lamps rather than overhead lighting--in general, making office space more comforting)” (Respondent 11), while another emphasized the value of library leadership “asking how the work environment can be made better” (Respondent 39). Furthermore, the need for “personal spaces in the work area” was raised, as “shared desks cause low morale” (Respondent 329). These findings revealed that workspaces must be designed with both functionality and employee well-being in mind, including comfort, personalization, and support for individual and team morale, which can directly contribute to reducing work-related burnout.

Access to proper resources was deemed essential for supporting academic libraries and ensuring the well-being of their academic librarians. This encompassed everything from adequate funding for materials to robust professional development opportunities. When academic librarians had the resources they needed to perform their jobs effectively, they felt supported, motivated, and less prone to work-related burnout. However, dwindling resources have plagued academic libraries for many years. One respondent lamented, “we’ve had budget cuts every single year in the 16 years I’ve been here” (Respondent 116). This sentiment was repeated by others who pleaded for “more resources to accomplish goals” (Respondent 314) and the need to “provide adequate resources” (Respondent 378). The lack of resources not only hindered librarians’ ability to do their jobs but also created pressure to “do more with less” (Respondent 127), a mentality that contributed to work-related burnout. Respondents emphasized the importance of “being willing to let services go when there aren’t resources to support” (Respondent 316) and “creating a space where we can say no if we don’t have the resources to take on something” (Respondent 52). Ultimately, one respondent stressed the need for

responsible stewardship of existing resources stating, “the goal should be to use resources well” (Respondent 111). This sentiment underscored that adequate resources and the agency to utilize them effectively are crucial for a healthy and sustainable academic library environment.

Appropriate staffing was a critical environmental factor. Although it had social implications, the availability of adequate staff directly impacted the work environment. Understaffing leads to overwork, stress, burnout, and ultimately attrition, creating a vicious cycle. Respondents consistently emphasized that having adequate staffing alleviated work-related burnout. This included straightforward pleas to “hire more people” (Respondent 71) and “filling vacant positions” (Respondent 97), as well as requests for “increased staffing” (Respondent 99) to ensure the library functioned effectively. More specifically, respondents cited the need for “hiring more librarians to equalize the workload” (Respondent 68) and “employment of additional full-time staff members to help in the operational schedule of the library” (Respondent 137). These comments demonstrated a desire for staffing levels that appropriately supported the workload, preventing individuals from being overburdened. Moreover, respondents stressed the importance of library leadership to proactively address staffing issues. This included “taking recommendations for staffing more seriously” (Respondent 95) and “making sure all positions are filled adequately and timely” (Respondent 176). Ultimately, “fully staffing the library” (Respondent 253) and “maintaining adequate numbers of staff” (Respondent 168) were seen as crucial for creating a sustainable work environment where librarians could thrive and work-related burnout abated.

Related to appropriate staffing is proper workloads, the final environmental factor. The amount and type of work assigned to academic librarians directly impacted their stress levels and the overall atmosphere of the academic library. Manageable workloads contributed to a healthier

and more sustainable work environment, which allowed academic librarians to thrive both personally and professionally. Respondents emphasized the importance of “equitable workloads” (Respondent 84) and “fair distribution of work responsibilities” (Respondent 122). This included “consideration given to even distribution of workload across positions” (Respondent 33) and “the practice of supporting supervisors in distributing work equitably so that core work tasks can be completed with everyone in a department contributing their efforts” (Respondent 75). Additionally, respondents expressed the need for open communication and proactive management of workloads. This included “inviting discussion about workloads” (Respondent 243) and “attention to workload management” (Respondent 261). Library leaders should strive for “more reasonable workload expectations” (Respondent 283) and be willing to adjust responsibilities as needed, “managing the workload spread and reorganizing work responsibilities when needed” (Respondent 319).

The five identified subthemes from Question 2 (positive leadership behaviors, good communication, follower support, autonomy, and environmental factors) are interrelated and contributed to organizational effectiveness, leading to a reduction in work-related burnout among academic librarians (Griggs-Taylor & Lee, 2022; Hogarth, 2017; Martin, 2018, 2020; Weyant et al., 2021a, 2021b). Positive leadership behaviors served as a foundation that influenced all other subthemes. When library leadership consistently demonstrated these behaviors, they enhanced communication quality, strengthened follower support, established appropriate autonomy boundaries, and proactively addressed environmental challenges. Good communication connected library leadership with academic librarians. Effective communication channels enhanced follower support, established transparent expectations regarding autonomy, and initiated collaborative problem-solving for environmental factors that may be impacting the

academic library. When communication broke down, these connections deteriorated, increasing work-related burnout vulnerability in academic librarians. Follower support acted as both a product of positive leadership behaviors and communication; it proved a critical buffer against workplace stressors. Autonomy was important to academic librarians as it allowed them to exercise their professional expertise when serving their users, contributing to scholarship, and advancing the mission of the library. Positive leadership behaviors ensured autonomy was properly calibrated, allowing for sufficient independence while providing necessary guidance and avoiding isolation which also accelerated work-related burnout. Environmental factors (workload, staffing, resources, physical space) impacted all other elements. Even with good library leadership, communication, support, and autonomy, persistent negative environmental conditions overwhelmed academic librarians' coping mechanisms and increased the chance that work-related burnout occurred (Albro & Fic, 2022; Johnson & Page, 2022; Miles & Markgren, 2022). The complexity and interconnectedness of these five subthemes, as shown in this systemic view, means that dysfunction in any one area can exacerbate work-related burnout for academic librarians in other areas, oftentimes creating the perfect storm (Albro & Fic, 2022; Del Rio et al., 2022; Holt et al., 2022; McCormack & Cotter, 2013).

Summary of Subthemes

Overall, the analysis revealed that the five subthemes emerging from Question 1 (negative leadership behaviors, communication deficiencies, restricted autonomy, inadequate follower support, and problematic governance structures) formed an interconnected web of organizational dysfunction, directly contributing to academic librarian work-related burnout. Conversely, the five subthemes from Question 2 (positive leadership behaviors, good communication, robust follower support, appropriate autonomy, and supportive environmental

factors) were found to be interrelated and instrumental in fostering organizational effectiveness, ultimately leading to a reduction in work-related burnout among academic librarians. Having identified these critical subthemes, the researcher then applied deductive coding using Kouzes and Posner’s framework to further interpret these findings.

Kouzes and Posner’s Framework

After considering the subthemes and placing codes under their respective Kouzes and Posner’s leadership practices, analysis revealed that both survey open-ended questions indicated the importance of the same two leadership traits. For Question 1, the lack of leadership practices associated with Enable Others to Act (31%) and Model the Way (26%) contributed to work-related burnout in academic libraries. For Question 2, the presence of leadership practices associated with Enable Others to Act (33%) and Model the Way (18%) mitigated work-related burnout in academic libraries (see Table 29).

Table 29

Kouzes and Posner’s Leadership Practices

Question	Leadership Practice	<i>n</i>	Percentage
Question 1: Describe library leadership practices you feel would contribute to work-related burnout in academic libraries.	Enable Others to Act	327.40	31%
	Model the Way	275.40	26%
	Other	193.00	18%
	Encourage the Heart	123.40	12%
	Inspire a Shared Vision	82.40	08%
	Challenge the Process	52.40	05%
Question 2: Describe library leadership practices you feel would mitigate work-related burnout in academic libraries.	Enable Others to Act	365.80	33%
	Model the Way	201.80	18%
	Encourage the Heart	199.80	18%
	Inspire a Shared Vision	153.80	14%
	Other	143.00	13%
	Challenge the Heart	55.80	05%

Note. For Question 1, the assumption is that the lack of these leadership practices contributes to work-related burnout in academic libraries.

Semi-Structured Interviews. During Phase II from September 9, 2024, to September 18, 2024, the researcher conducted 17 semi-structured interviews via Microsoft Teams with most averaging approximately 30 minutes or less. Interviewees self-identified on the original survey by providing an email address for contact. These emails were exported into Microsoft Excel and then systematic sampling was used to select 17 volunteers for interview solicitations. The email solicitations included the phrase, “if you have experienced work-related burnout in your current position as an academic librarian,” thereby targeting librarians who met the specific criterion of having experience work-related burnout, which is a characteristic of purposive sampling. All who were solicited for interviews responded affirmatively and 17 interviews were successfully completed.

During the semi-structured interviews, the transcription feature in Microsoft Teams was enabled. Each transcript was reviewed, and all identifying information removed. The transcripts were then sent to each interviewee for content approval. Finally, all transcripts were coded to identify themes. The same process that was used to code the open-ended questions from the Academic Librarian Leadership and Burnout Survey was used to code the interviewees’ transcripts. There were 81 items coded and then placed into their respective Kouzes and Posner’s leadership practices or the Other category.

Due to the sensitive nature of the interview, participants were given the option to have their cameras on or off during the interview. Therefore, some of the identifying demographics collected in the initial online survey were not captured. One respondent requested that their title and state not be placed together for fear that it would make them distinguishable. Assurances were made to all the interviewees that no identifying data would be used in this study. Interviewees represented nine southeastern states, with female interviewees outnumbering their

male counterparts (see Table 30). Most respondents had been at their current job for less than ten years ($n = 14$), with the remaining respondents having been in their current position for 11 - 19 years ($n = 3$).

During the interviews, participants were asked seven questions:

1. In what state do you currently work?
2. What is your current position?
3. How many years have you been working in your current position?
4. Can you describe any experiences of work-related burnout that you have had in your current position? How did these experiences make you feel?
5. How have library leadership practices impacted your experiences with work-related burnout? Can you provide me with an example of that?
6. Would you ever consider leaving your current position due to work-related burnout? Why or why not?
7. Is there anything else that you would like to share about your experience with work-related burnout in the academic library?

Unlike the Academic Librarian Leadership and Burnout Survey's open-ended questions, participants were not asked for library leadership practices that either contributed or mitigated work-related burnout. The interviewees were allowed the freedom to discuss any aspect of library leadership connected to work-related burnout: positive, negative, or both. The process for coding the semi-structured interviews was much like the process for coding the open-ended questions from the Academic Librarian Leadership and Burnout Survey. Once the interviews were conducted, the Microsoft Teams transcriptions were exported into a Microsoft Word document. All identifying information was removed and any parts of the transcripts that were

unclear were checked against the videos and edited when appropriate. The final transcripts were sent to the interviewees for approval. Several interviewees sent back small edits, which were made, and then 17 interview transcripts were coded using an inductive/deductive hybrid approach. This involved multiple iterations of coding, examining the data to identify subthemes, then categorizing the coded segments within the predetermined Kouzes and Posner themes (Ary et al., 2019).

Table 30

Interviewee Demographics

Demographic Category	Groups	<i>n</i>	Percentage
Sex	Male	5	29.41%
	Female	12	70.59%
State	Florida	2	11.76%
	Georgia	2	11.76%
	Kentucky	2	11.76%
	Louisiana	1	5.88%
	Mississippi	2	11.76%
	Missouri	1	5.88%
	North Carolina	2	11.76%
	Tennessee	1	5.88%
	Virginia	4	23.53%
Time in Current Position	1–5 years	10	58.82%
	6–10 years	4	23.53%
	11–19 years	3	17.65%

Interview Coding. The top three items mentioned in connection to work-related burnout were work overload (14%), appropriate staffing (7%), and negative leadership behaviors (7%). One reference and instruction librarian professed that burnout manifested for them as overwhelmingness stating, “there’s so much and there are so many things that need to be done that even picking something to work on feels really overwhelming” (Interviewee 17). Interviewee 8 expressed, “I think that sometimes when I do feel like a sense of burnout or

overwhelm, I might call it, it's because I'm having to task switch so much because of the lack of staff." Negative leadership behaviors also contributed to work-related burnout in the academic library. Leaders were described as bullies, uninformed, unconnected, and disinterested.

Interviewee 14 described their library leader as "rude and disrespectful," stating that their current dean's "soft skills are completely broken."

Interview Subthemes. Work overload emerged as the dominant environmental factor contributing to work-related burnout, a sentiment stressed by eleven interviewees. The sheer weight of responsibilities was a recurring complaint. One interviewee, struggling to balance diverse tasks, expressed, "it's hard to juggle collection development, with electronic resources and budgeting . . . I'm just trying to stay afloat with all the responsibilities that I have" (Interviewee 4). This feeling of being overwhelmed was further emphasized by another, who described burnout as stemming from "the demands of being a user librarian" (Interviewee 2). The issue was not just about the volume of work, but also the perception that library leadership did not consider individual's limits. As one interviewee declared, there was a "disregard for workload and capacity" (Interviewee 7). This was supported by others who felt "too much is expected, too many tasks" (Interviewee 10). The feeling of being overwhelmed intensified when one librarian perceived their work ethic was being exploited, as evidenced by the comment, "but it is frustrating that they're like she can just do it all" (Interviewee 12). Collectively, these shared experiences revealed a stark pattern, excessive workloads frequently contributed to work-related burnout in academic librarians.

Work overload was often inextricably linked to the issue of inadequate staffing. Five interviewees cited short staffing as a direct cause of work-related burnout, and numerous others connected the two. Interviewee 5 lamented, "if we wanted to have a staff that was adequate and

scalable, the number of additional people that we would need would be more than either the university or even the build could handle.” This underscored not only the current shortage but also the perceived impossibility of rectifying it. The direct impact of inadequate staffing on individual workload was palpable. Interviewee 8 expressed, “I feel like the potential for burnout is there because of how little staff we have. There are only three liaisons and there were six . . . and there’s a lot of teaching.” The inherent weakness of small teams made the hardship even greater, fostering potential resentment. As Interviewee 5 explained, “We’re a small team so if somebody is taking a step back everybody else has to take a step up . . . it’s not necessarily fair to folks.” This sentiment of shared burden was also expressed by Interviewee 7, who stated, “Our organization is understaffed. You know I have three different jobs. Many people have multiple jobs and there’s no end in sight.” The overwhelming growth of responsibilities was reflected in Interviewee 14’s account, “I support three different departments, and I have supported up to seven departments before. Some of that on occasion would be due to needing to hire more folks.” Understaffing led to unsustainable workloads, increasing the risk for work-related burnout. Both issues are likely related to insufficient institutional support and a lack of resources.

Lack of administrative support was an environmental factor that directly impacted work-related burnout among academic librarians. This institutional neglect manifested as a feeling of powerlessness, as illustrated by one librarian’s observation that “even a whole cadre of faculty marching up to the administrative office saying you need to support libraries more isn’t really going to change much” (Interviewee 3). This perceived futility was compounded by “a strong feeling that these efforts aren’t valued or valuable at the highest administrative levels” (Interviewee 5), which eroded professional identity and decreased organizational commitment. The connection between institutional devaluation and work-related burnout was unmistakable, as

another librarian stated, “at an institutional level, where I have been in organizations that do not value and appreciate the work of librarians, burnout is endemic” (Interviewee 17). Without proper administrative recognition and resource allocation, academic libraries were forced into a self-perpetuating cycle of work overload, inadequate staffing, and diminished services, leading to prolong work-related burnout and undermining their crucial institutional role.

Administrative support directly impacted the resources available to academic libraries. When this support was insufficient, work-related burnout occurred. While some interviewees experienced adequate funding, as Interviewee 1 stated, “my department is fully funded,” this was not the consensus of the group. More commonly, academic librarians faced unsustainable workloads under diminishing resources, with Interviewee 7 lamenting that administrators “expect staff to do more with less or with nothing” and noting a clear “lack of support for professional development.” This resource scarcity was an unyielding source of stress, as Interviewee 13 observed, “budget constraints bring up burnout pretty regularly.” The constant pressure to maintain service levels amid continuous budget cuts created a draining environment of constant crisis management, described by Interviewee 13 as “the perpetual budget pressure and like everybody’s always constantly reviewing and what can we do without and what can we chip away and like it starts to get kind of exhausting.” The combination of increasing demands and decreasing resources created ripe conditions for work-related burnout to thrive, leaving academic librarians emotionally exhausted and professionally depleted as they struggled to fulfill their job duties with very little resources.

Although resource constraints remained a significant challenge for many academic librarians, compensation appeared to be sufficient. The interviewees suggested that this proper compensation was a potential buffer against work-related burnout. Several interviewees

highlighted how proper compensation positively affected workplace morale and wellbeing. Interviewee 1 shared a particularly encouraging experience, noting that “our university went through a salary study that ended up getting substantial pay raises for a lot of us, which is fantastic . . . I think that has helped a lot of people significantly, like morale seems to be up.” This observation suggested that when administration addresses compensation inequities, it can have a meaningful impact on academic librarian well-being. Similarly, Interviewee 12 identified “paying appropriately” as an important factor in reducing work-related burnout. These testimonials showed that while work-related burnout was driven by resource limitations, fair compensation offset some of the negative effects, demonstrating that targeted administrative support, even in curtailed environments, can be effective.

The role of colleagues as a potential cause or mitigator of work-related burnout surfaced for the first time in the interviewees’ responses. On the positive side, supportive peer relationships served as a crucial buffer against work-related burnout, as Interviewee 6 indicated they assuaged their work-related burnout by “finding a supportive structure . . . a circle of people who have experiences that are similar enough, you know where you feel comfortable being fairly honest about kind of what the dynamic is in your organization. . . .” A peer support network may provide emotional validation, practical advice, and a sense of community, helping academic librarians to navigate challenges in the academic library that may otherwise contribute to work-related burnout. Conversely, colleagues became sources of stress when perceived imbalances in expertise or commitment were present. Interviewee 2 pointed to disparities in professional knowledge as particularly problematic and potentially leading to library attrition. They cautioned, “unless we have a serious conversation about equalizing the knowledge level of liaisons within academic libraries more and more liaisons like me, I believe will leave the field

because they feel their colleagues' expertise is not as solid as they would expect it to be.”

Similarly, Interviewee 9 explained how varying levels of dedication created additional burdens, stating “there can just be different levels of responsibility, dedication, commitment, all those things, and when you get people who don't have that same level of investment it causes burnout for other people.” These responses illustrated how colleagues who underperformed or lacked necessary expertise transferred workload and stress to their more committed coworkers, creating resentment and accelerating work-related burnout among those who felt compelled to compensate for their colleagues' insufficiencies.

Leadership behaviors, encompassing both positive and negative aspects, identified as another subtheme in the interviewees' responses. The demonstration of supportive positive leadership behaviors (e.g., understanding, consistency, fairness, and trustworthiness) was reported by academic librarians to alleviate work-related burnout. As Interviewee 9 shared, “my boss, she is a very caring, supportive, kind person,” showcasing how compassionate leadership created psychological safety. This support extended beyond emotional reassurance to tangible recognition of effort for another interviewee. “The extra work that I have done for things that are like outside of my current position, but were part of my previous position, both the Deans that I've worked for have made sure that I've gotten stipends for those” (Interviewee 16). Such acknowledgment of extra effort showcased the importance of recognition helping to decrease work-related burnout by validating academic librarians' contributions. The protective effect of positive leadership behaviors was crucial, as Interviewee 17 observed, “if I didn't have a supportive boss . . . I would be looking to leave,” thereby illustrating library leadership's direct influence on retention.

Conversely, negative leadership behaviors (e.g., improper supervision, incommunicative, resistant to change, unsupportive, inappreciative) accelerated work-related burnout through a combination of neglect, poor communication, and resistance to innovation. Many academic librarians reported working in leadership vacuums. Interviewee 3 bemoaned that “there’s very little leadership” and “there’s very little communication,” while Interviewee 4 complained, “I feel like I didn’t really have any guidance from leadership.” Interviewee 10 further emphasized this point, noting, “I could go to leadership and ask for help or support and not get it.” This revealed that even when leadership maintained a nominal presence, meaningful support remained unattainable. When library leadership was present but exhibiting negative behaviors, it actively contributed to work-related burnout through clinging to the status quo. Interviewee 6 described “not a lot of receptivity to change or innovation or trying anything new” and Interviewee 3 revealed “there’s very little forward thinking when ideas are brought.” Interviewees’ responses also revealed instances of overt hostility and a profound lack of appreciation, as exemplified by Interviewee 7’s account: “My boss expected me to keep my head down and my mouth shut . . . for about 19 years I’ve had zero shows of appreciation for my work from my supervisor.” This chronic lack of recognition and support left academic librarians feeling expendable, captured in the following observation about how library leadership treated systems librarians: “they just burnt them out and then just keep replacing them . . . they don’t realize . . . that people talent is something to invest in. It’s just like everything else that they invest money in, but they don’t take it seriously and they just think people are easy to replace” (Interviewee 10). Library leadership’s apparent view that academic librarians were easily replaceable directly contradicted the collaborative essence of library work and created a toxic work environment. This disposable attitude towards academic librarians was further illustrated as Interviewee 10 continued

expressing frustration that library leadership would rather dismiss departing librarians than tackle the root causes of turnover, “I think it would be nice if library administration would address issues instead of just saying, ‘well, we’re sorry to see you go, but don’t let the door hit you on the way out.” Another interviewee explicitly linked the academic library’s culture to its leadership, stating, “our culture in the library, from the very upper leadership definitely leaves me feeling stressed, overwhelmed, unsupported, disrespected, and I would say that is directly linked to the Dean of the library” (Interviewee 14). A comparative summary about the interview results is provided in Tabel 31.

Table 31

Comparison of Leadership Practices from Open-Ended Questions and Interviews

	Leadership Practice	<i>n</i>	Percentage
Question 1: Describe library leadership practices you feel would contribute to work-related burnout in academic libraries.	Enable Others to Act	327.40	31%
	Model the Way	275.40	26%
	Other	193.00	18%
	Encourage the Heart	123.40	12%
	Inspire a Shared Vision	82.40	08%
	Challenge the Process	52.40	05%
Question 2: Describe library leadership practices you feel would mitigate work-related burnout in academic libraries.	Enable Others to Act	365.80	33%
	Model the Way	201.80	18%
	Encourage the Heart	199.80	18%
	Inspire a Shared Vision	153.80	14%
	Other	143.00	13%
	Challenge the Process	55.80	05%
Interviews	Other	29.00	36%
	Enable Others to Act	19.60	24%
	Model the Way	12.60	16%
	Encourage the Heart	11.60	14%
	Inspire a Shared Vision	4.60	6%
	Challenge the Process	3.60	4%

Note. *n* = the number of original codes placed under the Kouzes and Posner’s framework. The two most mentioned factors in the Other category were work overload and appropriate staffing. The interviewees introduced a new factor that was placed in the Other category, Colleagues (see

Table 32). Colleagues were said to impact work-related burnout if they were inexperienced (Interviewee 2), uncommitted (Interviewee 9), or creating conflicts (Interviewee 12).

Kouzes and Posner’s Framework. After considering the subthemes and placing the codes from the semi-structured interviews under their respective Kouzes and Posner’s leadership practices, it was apparent that the same two leadership practices were at the forefront of academic librarians’ minds regarding work-related burnout, Enable Others to Act (24%) and Model the Way (16%). However, for the interviewee group, Other (36%) factors outside of library leadership’s control seemed to have the greatest impact on work-related burnout in the academic library (see Tables 31 and 32).

Table 32

Other Factors Impacting Work-Related Burnout

Factors	<i>n</i>	Percentage
Work Overload	11	37.90%
Appropriate Staffing	6	20.70%
Colleagues	3	10.30%
Lack of Opportunities for Advancement	2	6.90%
Lack of Resources	2	6.90%
Poor Compensation	2	6.90%
Variety of Tasks	2	6.90%
No Support from Institutional Administration	1	3.40%

Turnover Intention

When the interviewees were questioned about turnover intentions, 59% (*n* = 10) indicated they were not interested in leaving their current position, while 41% (*n* = 7) stated they were either considering leaving their current position or actively seeking employment elsewhere. Interviewee 15 was working towards leaving the librarian profession altogether. These results were slightly different than the percentages from the original survey where 47% (*n* = 241) of academic librarians denoted they had not considered leaving their current position, and 53% (*n* =

271) of academic librarians answered they were considering leaving their current position due to work-related burnout.

The reasons provided for not leaving their current position included supportive leadership and colleagues, family living and working in the same area, and nearing retirement. When asked if they would consider leaving their current position due to work-related burnout, Interviewee 8 responded negatively, reasoning “the leadership we have right now is fantastic at our library, so that plays a big part.” Interviewee 6 stated, “my next career move is retirement.” Interviewee 1 was forthright in their response to the question about leaving their current position due to work-related burnout:

No, I tell everyone at my work that I’m a lifer. I’m like, I’m never leaving. I love my job. I love my supervisor. I love my department. I can’t imagine working anywhere else. I’m very settled in the community that I live in, like I’m having kids here. My husband has a great job here, so definitely not going to leave work. Life balance is really fantastic where I work, I feel like I’m paid well for my work. No, my answer is no.

Several interviewees considering vacating their current position due to work-related burnout cited poor leadership as the driving factor. Interviewee 4 explained that at their library, an absence of aspirations and goals for the library was influencing their decision to leave their position stating, “there’s no clear direction in where our leader wants to go.” Another librarian responded emphatically that they “absolutely” were considering leaving their current position. Reasons given for this included “minimal support,” “a lack of understanding of what I do daily,” and making “decisions that affect me without sharing that information” (Interviewee 10). Interviewee 16 explained they “absolutely would” consider leaving their current position because the “burnout culture” had not been addressed by leadership. These responses aligned with other

academic library research concerning turnover (Heady et al., 2020; Kennedy & Garewal, 2020; Luzius & Ard, 2006; Markgren et al., 2007).

Summary

This study's purpose was to measure the prevalence of work-related burnout in academic librarians in the southeastern region of the United States, to examine the relationships (if any) work-related burnout had with demographics, perceived leadership practices, and turnover intention, and to explain how leadership practices impacted work-related burnout in academic librarians. The quantitative phase consisting of the CBI's work-related burnout subscale, and the LPI: Observer was followed by the qualitative phase consisting of two open-ended questions and semi-structured interviews. Analyses of the data sets were used to answer three research questions. The first two research questions were answered using the quantitative data and the third research question was answered using the qualitative data.

For Research Question 1, there were significant mean differences revealed for the following demographics: age, time in current position, and turnover intentions. However, sex and race were found to have no statistical significance on TWRBSs. It is important to note that due to the small sample size, the "prefer not to say" groups may lack sufficient statistical power, potentially affecting the reliability of comparisons. For Research Question 2, the results indicated a significant linear relationship between LPI: Observer scores and TWRBSs. The LPI: Observer scores explained approximately 15% of the variance in TWRBSs. This suggested that other factors not included in this analysis may play a substantial role in predicting TWRBSs. For Research Question 3, a thematic analysis of coded data identified six subthemes related to leadership practices: leadership behaviors, communication, autonomy, follower support, governance structures, and environmental factors. Positive leadership practices (e.g., sincerity,

fairness, honesty) and good communication mitigated work-related burnout, while negative behaviors (e.g., toxicity, micromanagement) and inappropriate communication increased it. Problematic governance structures, especially those lacking collaboration and shared decision-making, contributed significantly to work-related burnout. Environmental factors (e.g., manageable workloads, adequate staffing, support from institutional administration) created work environments that supported academic librarian well-being, reducing work-related burnout when coupled with positive leadership behaviors. Thematic analysis of interview data revealed two primary subthemes: environmental factors and leadership behaviors. Environmental challenges emerged as the dominant theme, encompassing work overload, staffing shortages, resource limitations, inadequate compensation, insufficient institutional support, and problematic colleague relationships. While less prevalent than environmental concerns, leadership behaviors also played a significant role in the findings. The coded data from the open-ended questions from the Academic Librarian Leadership and Burnout Survey revealed the top two leadership practices impacting work-related burnout in the academic library were Enable Others to Act and Model the Way. This was confirmed by the interviewees' responses. However, for the interviewees, Other factors outside of library leadership's control had the greatest impact on work-related burnout in the academic library, substantiating the results from Question 2. Turnover intentions from both sets of data were similar indicating that on average, almost half of the academic librarian population in the southeastern region of the United States is actively considering leaving their current position due to work-related burnout. Chapter V provides a discussion of these findings, the implications, and recommendations for further research.

Chapter V

Discussion

This final chapter begins with a summary of the study, followed by a review of its purpose, related literature, research design, and the key findings. The discussion of the findings includes conclusions drawn from the research, recommendations for library and university leadership, and suggestions for future research. The study's findings are based on the perceptions and experiences of academic librarians working at secondary institutions in the southeastern United States.

Work-related burnout is increasingly taking a toll on individuals in academia, negatively impacting the well-being and performance of both staff and faculty, which subsequently influences student development and institutional efficacy (Johns & Ossoff, 2005; Pope-Ruark, 2022; Sabagh et al., 2018; Sestili et al., 2018; Velez-Cruz & Holstun, 2022). Given that the academic library has long been considered the heart of the university, it is unsurprising that academic librarians also experience the negative effects of work-related burnout (Holm et al., 2022; Leupp, 1924; Nardine, 2019). Graduates from higher education institutions provide significant benefits to society, including higher earnings resulting in increased tax revenue, higher employment rates, greater civic engagement, and healthier behaviors (Ahearn et al., 2023; Creusere et al., 2019; Lawrence, 2017; Ma & Pender, 2023). Therefore, it behooves academic leadership to support staff and faculty who provide instruction and student support to ensure that students receive the highest quality education with the ultimate goal of retention and graduation. Researchers have emphasized the importance of studying burnout within academia, expressing a

need for further research focused on its prevalence and impact (Sabagh et al., 2018; Sestili et al., 2018). The literature also highlights the connection between leadership practices, low morale, and burnout in librarians, all of which affect work performance, job satisfaction, and attrition (Kendrick, 2017; Kennedy & Garewal, 2020; McCormack & Cotter, 2013; Ortega, 2017). Understanding these leadership practices within academic libraries will inform and assist library and institutional leadership in modifying their professional behaviors and developing strategies to identify and support followers suffering from work-related burnout, thus making strides towards ameliorating this ubiquitous phenomenon among academic librarians and potentially other employees across higher education institutions.

Purpose of the Study

Given the widespread and detrimental effects of work-related burnout in academic libraries, the multifaceted purpose of this study was to measure the prevalence of work-related burnout in academic librarians in the southeastern region of the United States, to examine the relationships (if any) work-related burnout had with demographics, perceived leadership practices, and turnover intention, and to explain how leadership practices impacted work-related burnout in academic librarians (Dixon, 2022; Hogarth, 2017; Holm et al., 2022; Kane, 2018). Four guiding frameworks were used in this study to synthesize the themes and empirical evidence associated with work-related burnout. These included the JD-R model, the HRTM, the five practices of exemplary leadership, and the measurement of work-related burnout by domain (Demerouti et al., 2001; Kouzes & Posner, 2023; Kristensen et al., 2005; Mayo, 1933). Three questions guided this study:

RQ1: Is there a relationship between the characteristics of academic librarians (sex, age, race, time in current position, and turnover intentions) in the southeastern region of the

United States and the self-identification of work-related burnout as measured by the total work-related burnout subscale?

RQ2: Is there a relationship between the perception of library leadership practices of academic librarians in the southeastern region of the United States as measured by the LPI: Observer and the self-identification of work-related burnout as measured by the total work-related burnout subscale?

RQ3: What are the experiences of academic librarians in the southeastern region of the United States concerning the impact library leadership practices have on work-related burnout?

The results of this study contain valuable insights for academic library leadership and higher education administrators, helping inform and undergird crucial decisions regarding the prevention, management, and support of work-related burnout within academic settings.

Related Literature

The term “burnout” was first coined in the early 1970s by the psychologist, Herbert Freudenberger to describe a phenomenon he witnessed among volunteers working at a drug addiction clinic. Individuals experiencing burnout exhibited physical and behavioral symptoms including exhaustion, headaches, insomnia, gastrointestinal distress, anger, frustration, and paranoia (Freudenberger, 1974, 1975). Freudenberger later realized that burnout was not limited to this setting but was occurring across different types of institutions.

In the years that followed, burnout would garner attention from other researchers as well with many scholars attempting to define and assess it (Kristensen et al., 2005; Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Pines & Aronson, 1988; Shirom, 1989; World Health Organization, 2019). This growing interest led to the development of different instruments for assessing burnout in

individuals. Among the most widely recognized and validated are the MBI, the OBI, and the CBI (Pate et al., 2023). The CBI includes 19 items measuring burnout across three domains: personal burnout, work-related burnout, and client-related burnout (Kristensen et al., 2005). The work-related burnout subscale focused on the connection between exhaustion and fatigue and a respondent's place of employment. Research has shown that this seven-item measure demonstrated high internal reliability with a small non-response rate; also noted was validity evidence and reliability support (Barton et al., 2022; Berat et al., 2016; Jeon et al., 2019; Kristensen et al., 2005; Pate et al., 2023; Sestili et al., 2018; Wood et al., 2020).

Work-related burnout proved to be costly for both individuals and organizations (Alves et al., 2019; Blanding, 2015; Han et al., 2019; Minnehan & Paine, 1982; Shirom, 2005). Employees suffering from work-related burnout tended to be less productive and had higher attrition rates (Fyn et al., 2019; Minnehan & Paine, 1982). High turnover rates created additional expenses for organizations, including the costs associated with recruiting, selecting, replacing, and training new staff (Cascio, 2006). Other negative consequences of employee turnover included loss of mentors, loss of organizational memory, and a reduction in overall organizational performance (Allen et al., 2010; Fyn et al., 2019). Those suffering from burnout experienced physical and mental maladies, such as hypertension, acid reflux, loss of appetite, insomnia, diabetes, anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem (Ahola et al., 2005; Bartlett, 2018; Hogarth, 2017; Jing et al., 2023; Pines & Aronson, 1988; Pope-Ruark, 2022).

Organizational theory posited that work-related burnout stemmed from organizational stressors coupled with an individual's insufficient coping strategies and a lack of job resources (Edú-Valsania et al., 2022). The JD-R model emphasized the imbalance of job demands and job resources (Demerouti et al., 2001). According to the JD-R model, when an abundance of job

resources was available to followers, the stress of job demands was lessened, and burnout levels decreased. HRTM, a behavioral approach, placed an emphasis on the leader-follower relationship, stressing the importance of collaboration (Mayo, 1933). Mayo underscored the need for leaders to understand their followers' needs, promote shared governance, recognize employee contributions, and encourage teamwork.

Within the professional literature, work-related burnout was present in public and academic librarians (Bartlett, 2018; Behrend, 2022; Holm et al., 2022; Kendrick, 2020; Smith et al., 2020; Wood et al., 2020). It was noted that academic librarians had unique stressors that contributed to their burnout (Kane, 2018). These stressors included unpreparedness (Affleck, 1996), technostress (Ennis, 2005; Murgu, 2021), patrons (Petek, 2018), role stress (Shupe & Pung, 2011), faculty status (Cameron et al., 2021; Stine, 2022), parenthood (Holt et al., 2022), and the COVID-19 pandemic (Bynoe & Coates, 2022; Lievens, 2021; Roth et al. 2023; Salvesen & Berg, 2021).

Dysfunctional work cultures, along with work-related burnout and low morale among academic librarians, have been linked to poor academic librarian leadership (Del Rio et al., 2022; Fic & Albro, 2022; Kendrick, 2017; Kennedy & Garewal, 2020; McCormack & Cotter, 2013; Ortega, 2017). Oftentimes, these negative experiences caused academic librarians to harbor ill feelings about their careers, leading them to consider leaving their current positions or even the profession of librarianship entirely (Heady, et al., 2020; Kendrick, 2017; Kennedy & Garewal, 2020; Luzius & Ard, 2006; Markgren et al., 2007). As a result, addressing these challenges and improving the work environment became crucial, not only for the well-being of academic librarians but also for the overall success of academic libraries. Retaining talented academic librarians ultimately benefitted libraries and their affiliated institutions (Emmons & Wilkinson,

2011; Mezick, 2007). Recruiting, hiring, onboarding, and training new academic librarians was costly to academic libraries and taxing to academic librarians as they were required to assume additional duties during the hiring and training of new librarians (Knight, 2013; Raschke, 2003). In contrast, the retention of colleagues was shown to positively impact workplace morale. (Kennedy & Garewal, 2020). Student retention can be directly correlated to the number of professional staff in academic libraries (Kennedy & Garewal, 2020; Mezick, 2007). In times of ongoing budget cuts, attrition may mean that a vacated position is lost altogether (Geary & Hickey, 2019). As a result, it is necessary for library leadership to actively address and alleviate work-related burnout among their academic librarians in order to retain valuable followers.

Recent professional literature has emphasized the need for academic institutions to recognize and address work-related burnout within academic librarians (Behrend, 2022; Del Rio et al., 2022; Hogarth, 2017; Holm et al., 2022; Townsend & Bugg, 2020; Weyant et al., 2021a, 2021b). Suggestions for preventing, managing, and reducing work-related burnout in academic libraries included offering flexibility (Griggs-Taylor & Lee, 2022; Holt et al., 2022; Townsend & Bugg, 2020; Weeks et al., 2022), promoting a healthy work-life balance (Behrend, 2022; Christian, 2015; Colon-Aguirre & Webb, 2022; Griggs-Taylor & Lee, 2022; Holt et al., 2022; McCormack & Cotter, 2013), fostering good communication (Behrend, 2022; Griggs-Taylor & Lee, 2022; Keating & Cardenas, 2022; McCormack & Cotter, 2013), and setting realistic goals (Behrend, 2022). The importance of supportive leadership was also highlighted (Holm et al., 2022). Transformational leadership coupled with today's academic library environment made an excellent combination (Martin, 2016; Miles & Markgren, 2022; Phillips, 2014).

Transformational leadership has been proven to reduce work-related burnout (Chen et al., 2022; Del Rio et al., 2022; Fancher, 2022; Garczynski et al., 2022; Kelly & Hearld, 2020; Miles

& Markgren, 2022; Nardine, 2019; Tian & Guo, 2022; Tsang et al., 2022). Kouzes and Posner's (2023) *The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership* embodies the principles of transformational leadership. This behavioral framework is an evidence-based guide for leadership. It breaks down substantive leadership into five practices: Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart. These practices align with research showing that academic librarians responded positively to specific leadership traits (Martin, 2018).

Methods

This mixed-methods explanatory sequential study measured the prevalence of work-related burnout in academic librarians in the southeastern region of the United States and examined the relationships (if any) work-related burnout had with demographics, perceived leadership practices, and turnover intentions in an effort to explain how leadership practices impacted work-related burnout in academic librarians. This type of study required the collection of data in two phases: Phase I: Quantitative and Phase II: Qualitative. Phase I was informed by data collected and analyzed from two instruments: the total work-related burnout subscale from the CBI and the LPI: Observer. The Academic Librarian Leadership and Burnout Survey hosted these two instruments and also included demographic inquiries, a question about turnover intentions, and two open-ended questions. These two open-ended questions and semi-structured interviews provided the evidence for Phase II.

In Phase I, a total of 512 academic librarians from all thirteen southeastern states completed both instruments on the original survey. The total work-related burnout subscale from the CBI focused on the connection between exhaustion and fatigue and the respondent's employment in an academic library. This seven-item subscale measured work-related burnout

using two five-unit Likert scales. The LPI: Observer used 30 statements and a ten-unit Likert scale to assess observed leadership practices. The data gathered during Phase I were used to inform Phase II.

Phase II consisted of two open-ended questions from the original survey and semi-structured interviews with 17 volunteers from Phase I. This data provided more in-depth information regarding the impact library leadership practices have on work-related burnout. This second phase of follow-up was used to further probe academic librarians' experiences concerning work-related burnout in the academic library and the impact leadership practices have on it.

Before soliciting academic librarians to participate in this study, approval from the IRB was sought. This study was deemed exempt from IRB oversight by the review board and notification of this approval was received on June 18, 2024. Once IRB approval was granted, Phase I began with email solicitations to listservs and publicly available work email addresses. Postings to pertinent ALA discussion boards were also initiated. These solicitations contained a link to the original survey hosted on Qualtrics. The quantitative data collected during Phase I were used to answer the first two research questions.

At the end of the Academic Librarian Leadership and Burnout Survey, respondents were given the option to provide an email address should they want to volunteer for a follow-up interview. There was a total of 229 volunteers indicating their willingness to be interviewed. From that, 17 interviews were scheduled and confirmed for the month of September 2024. The quantitative data from Phase I was used to inform Phase II. The interview questions were reconsidered and edited based on the survey findings. The evidence for Phase II was gathered from the two open-ended questions at the end of the Academic Librarian Leadership and Burnout

Survey and the semi-structured interviews. This qualitative data was used to answer the third research question.

Limitations

This study may have been impacted by five limitations. First, the study's population was limited to academic librarians currently employed within the southeastern United States. The small sample size ($n = 512$) and geographic location may render the results ungeneralizable to a meaningful population (Berat et al., 2016). Second, respondent biases could have affected the results (Andrade, 2020; Barton et al., 2022). Andrade (2020) highlighted that respondents with bias are overrepresented in online survey samples, potentially distorting the findings. Third, the survey instruments used, the work-related subscale of the CBI and the LPI: Observer, are self-reporting and rely on respondents to provide honest answers. Fourth, as with any thematic analysis, bias and replicability are possible limitations that must be considered (Proudfoot, 2023). Finally, the timing of the study may have impacted the results, as data were collected at the start of the summer semester, a time when academic librarians may experience a lighter workload compared to other semesters, potentially influencing their responses.

Summary of the Findings

This explanatory sequential mixed-methods study addressed three research questions to explore work-related burnout among academic librarians in the southeastern United States and to examine how library leadership practices influence it. A subscale of the CBI was used to measure work-related burnout in respondents, revealing an average total work-related burnout score for the academic librarian respondents of 47.57. This score indicated that almost half of the respondents were suffering from burnout in their academic library environments. To assess leadership practices, the LPI: Observer was used, with librarians in southeastern academic

libraries averaging a score of 6.36. This score indicated a moderately strong leadership performance, with a potential for improvement.

Phase I: Quantitative

Research Question 1 sought to determine if significant differences in work-related burnout existed among demographic characteristics of academic librarians (sex, age, race, time in current position, and turnover intentions) in the southeastern region of the United States. An ANOVA was used to test the likelihood of influence among the CBI's total work-related burnout scores and sex, age, race, and time in current position. Results of ANOVA and post hoc comparisons revealed that age and time in current position had a significant impact on academic librarian's TWRBSs while sex and race did not.

Age was found to be statistically significant. Age was defined as the age of the academic librarian. This continuous variable was transformed into a categorical variable that included the following groups: 18–34, 35–44, 45–54, 55–64, 65+ and Prefer not to say. The TWRBSs were statistically significantly different between age groups, $F(5, 506) = 3.967, p = .002$. Tukey post hoc analysis revealed that individuals in the 18–34, 35–44, 55–64, and 65+ age groups showed significant differences in the measured outcome compared to those who preferred not to disclose their age, while the 45–54 age group does not show these differences.

Time in current position was found to be statistically significant. Time in current position was defined as the number of years the academic librarian has been employed as an academic librarian in their current position. This continuous variable was transformed into a categorical variable that included the following categories: less than 1 year, 1–5 years, 6–10 years, 11–19 years, and 20+ years. The differences in the TWRBSs were statistically significant among these groups $F(4, 507) = 8.021, p < .001$. Tukey post hoc analysis revealed there were statistically

significant increases in the measured outcome when comparing the less than 1 year group to each of the other groups.

Turnover intention was found to be statistically significant. A Welch's t-test was used to address the influence the categorical variable, turnover intention, had on work-related burnout. Academic librarians were asked if they had ever considered leaving their current position due to work-related burnout. They answered either yes or no. There was a statistically significant difference in TWRBSs between these groups, $t(509.73) = -16.41, p < .001$). This indicated that the mean TWRBS for academic librarians with no intention towards leaving their current position was significantly lower than the mean TWRBS for academic librarians who have considered leaving their current position. Therefore, it can be assumed that work-related burnout is a contributor to turnover in academic librarians.

Research Question 2 sought to determine if a relationship existed between the perception of library leadership practices of academic librarians in the southeastern region of the United States as measured by the LPI: Observer and the self-identification of work-related burnout as measured by the total work-related burnout subscale. The average TWRBS for the southeastern region was 47.57, and the average LPI: Observer score for the southeastern region was 6.36. Question analyses from the LPI: Observer revealed the highest scored observed leadership practice was Enable Others to Act (7.05). The other observed leadership practices presented as Encourage the Heart (6.53), Model the Way (6.22), Challenge the Process (6.10), and Inspire a Shared Vision (5.93). After using SPSS to run a hierarchical linear regression, it was determined that a significant linear relationship between the LPI: Observer composite scores and TWRBSs existed. However, the LPI: Observer composite scores explained only about 15% of the variance

in TWRBSs, suggesting other factors not included in this analysis may play a substantial role in predicting TWRBSs. This was confirmed during the data analyses of Research Question 3.

Phase II: Qualitative

Research Question 3 sought to explore experiences of academic librarians in the southeastern region of the United States concerning the impact library leadership practices have on work-related burnout in an effort to better understand this phenomenon and to explain and/or corroborate the quantitative findings from this study. The data collected and analyzed for this research question came from two open-ended questions at the end of the Academic Librarian Leadership and Burnout Survey and from 17 semi-structured interviews.

Two open-ended questions were presented for the respondents' consideration at the end of the Academic Librarian Leadership and Burnout Survey. The first open-ended question asked respondents to describe library leadership practices they felt contributed to work-related burnout in academic libraries. The analysis of this question resulted in 37 final codes which included a variety of library leadership practices that academic librarians believed contributed to work-related burnout in academic libraries. The top three practices were negative leadership behaviors (20%), micromanagement (8%), and poor communication (8%). Five interconnected themes emerged from the thematic analysis of the coded data: negative leadership behaviors, communication deficiencies, restricted autonomy, inadequate follower support, and problematic governance. These created a dysfunctional environment where work-related burnout became almost inevitable. Poor leadership triggered a cascade of problems beginning with unclear communication and lack of feedback, leading to micromanagement that stifled professional judgment and innovation. The absence of support for professional growth and work-life balance left librarians feeling undervalued, while exclusionary governance structures transformed

isolated leadership failures into systemic issues. The second open-ended question asked respondents to describe library leadership practices they felt mitigated work-related burnout in academic libraries. The analysis of this question resulted in 41 final codes which included the inverse of most of the codes presented in Question 1. The top three library leadership practices expressed by academic librarians that mitigated work-related burnout included positive leadership behaviors (10%), good communication (9%), and recognition (9%). Thematic analysis revealed five interrelated subthemes crucial for work-related burnout mitigation: positive leadership behaviors, effective communication, follower support, appropriate autonomy, and favorable environmental conditions. Positive leadership served as the foundation influencing all other areas, fostering clear communication that enhanced follower support and established clear autonomy boundaries. While follower support buffered workplace stress and appropriate autonomy allowed librarians to utilize their expertise, negative environmental factors like excessive workload and resource constraints could overwhelm even strong leadership and support systems, demonstrating how the interconnected nature of these factors meant that weaknesses in one area could negatively impact others and increase burnout risk. Final analysis of the two-open ended question responses revealed six subthemes across the coded responses: leadership behaviors, communication, autonomy, follower support, governance structures, and environmental factors. The final codes were placed under their associated Kouzes and Posner's leadership practices. Enable Others to Act was the most significant leadership practice overall (32%), playing an important role both when absent (contributing to work-related burnout) and when present (mitigating work-related burnout). Model the Way followed at 22%, also showing notable impact in both contexts.

There were 17 volunteers scheduled and interviewed after the Academic Librarian Leadership and Burnout Survey concluded and the quantitative data was analyzed. Interviewees were asked seven questions during these interviews. After the transcripts were edited and all identifying information removed, the interviewees were consulted for final approval. Analysis revealed the top three items mentioned in connection to work-related burnout were work overload (14%), appropriate staffing (7%), and negative leadership behaviors (7%). Based on the thematic analysis of the coded interview data, two major subthemes emerged regarding work-related burnout among academic librarians: environmental factors and leadership behaviors. Environmental factors dominated the interview findings and consisted of work overload (excessive responsibilities, disregard for capacity), inadequate staffing (understaffed departments, multiple responsibilities per person), lack of institutional administrative support (feeling undervalued, powerlessness), lack of resources (budget constraints, doing more with less), compensation (salary adjustments affecting morale), and relationships with colleagues (both supportive and problematic peer dynamics). Leadership behaviors formed the second subtheme, with positive leadership (understanding, consistency, fairness, trustworthiness, recognition of efforts) serving as a buffer against work-related burnout, while negative leadership behaviors (improper supervision, poor communication, resistance to change, lack of support and appreciation) actively contributed to it. The final codes were placed under their correlating Kouzes and Posner's leadership practices. Enable Others to Act (24%) and Model the Way (16%) scored the highest. However, for the interviewee group, Other (36%) factors outside of library leadership's control seemed to have the greatest impact on work-related burnout in the academic library.

Discussion of the Findings

This research study confirmed that many academic librarians employed within 13 southeastern states are experiencing work-related burnout. Using a subscale of the CBI, the average TWRBS presented was 47.57 out of 100. This score mirrored scores other researchers have collected using the same instrument, falling between reported similar TWRBS averages. For example, Demetres et al.'s. (2020) study revealed an average TWRBS of 46.4 amongst information professionals serving as reference, clinical, or research librarians ($n = 159$). Wood et al. (2020) discovered that academic librarians within the United States ($n = 1,628$) scored an average of 49.6 on the total work-related burnout subscale. When compared to other professions these scores are severe, higher than all other professions reported by Kristensen et al. (2005). They examined the TWRBSs of 15 professions revealing an average TWRBS of 33 (p. 201). The range of TWRBS averages by profession was midwives (43.5) reporting the highest and home helps (26.4) reporting the lowest. Also notable is that academic librarians had higher TWRBS averages than hospital doctors (39.8), social care workers (35.8), and supervisors (27.9).

Other researchers have had conflicting results when measuring burnout in academic librarians using the MBI. Affleck (1996) found 52.8% of bibliographic instruction librarians were reporting high burnout in at least one dimension of the MBI. In their cross-sectional study, consistent with the earlier Affleck study, Agyei et al. (2019) found that over 50% of the 153 respondents surveyed were experiencing fair or extreme burnout, although this study included librarians from academic, public, and special libraries. However, other studies using the MBI to assess occupational burnout in academic librarians would later contradict this finding. Matteson and Miller's (2013) study of emotional labor in librarianship reported much less severe burnout results than originally anticipated. Colon-Aguirre and Webb's (2020) exploratory survey found

no evidence of burnout amongst academic librarians in the southeastern United States. These contradictory burnout assessments could be due to the instruments used. Johnson (2024) examined the construct validity of the CBI when used to assess burnout in academic librarians. His findings supported the use of the CBI over the MBI with the academic librarian population, suggesting the MBI is inadequate when it comes to measuring burnout in librarians due to the strong professional identities they carry and the MBI's multidimensional approach to measuring burnout.

Age

Academic librarians in the 18–34, 35–44, 55–64, and 65+ age groups showed significant differences in the measured outcome compared to those who preferred not to disclose their age. Perhaps due to the sensitive nature of this subject, academic librarians were reluctant to provide identifying information despite assurances that the original survey was anonymous. Although not significant, higher TWRBS averages also presented in other demographic groups with the option not to disclose identifying information. In the Sex group, those who preferred not to disclose this information had an average TWRBS of 56.15. In the Race group, the average TWRBS for those selecting Prefer not to say was 55.95. Both of these averages were considerably higher than the total TWRBS of 47.57. Kristensen et al. (2005) expressed differences of 5 points or more on the CBI subscales were significant for the groups involved. However, it is important to note the low number of respondents in the Prefer not to say groups (Sex, 18; Age, 7; Race, 9) render any conclusions drawn from this data impractical for extrapolation to the entire academic librarian population.

Further analysis of the TWRBSs per age group, confirmed what other researchers have noted in the burnout literature (see Table 33). The age group 65 and older presented the lowest TWRBS (35.54). This is consistent with Wood et al.'s (2020) study of burnout in academic

librarians that revealed the oldest respondents had the lowest TWRBS (36.2). Wood et al. also related that younger women between the ages of 25 to 44 were more likely to experience burnout, but that for male academic librarians, burnout was not related to youth. Lo and Herman (2017) found younger respondents reported higher levels of feeling overwhelmed or burnt-out perhaps due to lower proficiency in their work or trying to impress their supervisors during the early stage of their career by volunteering to work longer hours. In contrast, Adebayo et al. (2018) reported that age did not impact work-related burnout.

Table 33

TWRBSs by Age

Demographic Category	Groups	<i>n</i>	TWRBS
Age	18–34 years	101	45.83
	35–44 years	150	48.57
	45–54 years	142	49.80
	55–64 years	91	45.21
	65+ years	21	35.54
	Prefer not to say	7	72.96

Time in Current Position

Academic librarians who had been in their current positions 1–5 years, 6–10 years, 11–19 years, and 20+ years showed significant differences in the measured outcome compared to those who had been in their current position for less than 1 year (see Table 34). This could indicate that academic librarians working for less than one year have not had time in their current position to develop work-related burnout, thus confirming Freudenberger’s (1975) opinion that burnout usually occurred 1 year after someone has started working at an organization. Academic librarians who had been in their current position for more than 20 years presented the next lowest average TWRBS; this is consistent with the findings from the Age group as the two may be interrelated. The academic librarians in the older age group would likely have also accumulated significant tenure in their positions.

Table 34*TWRBSs by Time in Current Position*

Demographic Category	Groups	<i>n</i>	TWRBS
Time in Current Position	Less than 1 year	47	32.90
	1–5 years	175	47.51
	6–10 years	115	50.00
	11–19 years	95	53.61
	20+ years	80	45.67

Turnover Intention

Academic librarians who had contemplated leaving their current positions exhibited a notable difference in the measured outcome compared to those who had not. Their average total work-related burnout score was 25.60 points higher than that of librarians who had not considered leaving (see Table 35). Librarians have consistently cited chronic stress and work-related burnout as central reasons for leaving their positions (Acadia & Vogt, 2023; Heady et al., 2020; Kaufman et al., 2023; Lopez, 2023; Ortega, 2017). Academic libraries play a crucial role in supporting the educational mission of institutions by providing access to resources and through fostering an environment that facilitates learning and research. Retaining committed and competent librarians is essential because their expertise helps ensure that students, faculty, and staff are able to navigate complex information systems, accurately evaluate information, and make effective use of library resources.

Table 35*TWRBSs by Turnover Intention*

Demographic Category	Groups	<i>n</i>	TWRBS
Turnover Intention	No	241	34.02
	Yes	271	59.62

Several studies have examined the reasons academic librarians voluntarily transition from one academic librarian position to another (Acadia & Vogt, 2023; Fyn et al., 2019; Heady et al.,

2020; Kaufman et al., 2023; Kendrick, 2017; Luzius & Ard, 2006). Participants in these studies provided various reasons for leaving their academic librarian positions, many of which were also identified in this study as contributors to work-related burnout, thereby confirming the relationship between turnover intention and work-related burnout. This study highlighted three main contributors to work-related burnout, two of which were the leadership practices of Model the Way and Enable Others to Act, along with an additional factor categorized as Other. Table 34 illustrates how the reasons cited in library literature for leaving academic librarian positions are linked to the burnout factors identified in this study, demonstrating the close relationship between the two.

Also present in the literature were several negative consequences associated with high turnover in academic libraries (see Table 36). These included loss of institutional knowledge, increased workload for remaining librarians, disruption of library services, low morale, and increased recruitment and training costs (Corbin, 2020; Fyn et al., 2019; Kaufman et al., 2023; Markgren et al., 2007). High turnover rates in academic libraries can create a cycle of instability, affecting service quality, employee well-being, and even the institution's reputation. Therefore, it is crucial for both library leadership and administration to act in addressing turnover within academic libraries.

Unlike demographics, library leadership can take proactive steps to address turnover intentions. Several recommendations for promoting retention have been given within the professional literature. Coordinating with human resources, library leadership should initiate retention strategies early in academic librarians' careers through effective hiring and orientation processes (Heady et al., 2020). Lopez (2023) advised discussing retention strategies during the interview process, allowing candidates to ask clarifying questions about employee support and

available resources for combatting stress and work-related burnout. Other areas to address should include role expectations, opportunities for professional growth, and prospects for advancement to help prevent any future misunderstandings.

Table 36

Reasons Cited in Literature for Leaving Academic Librarian Positions

Model the Way
Negative Leadership Behaviors
Unqualified Leadership
Enable Others to Act
Lack of Autonomy
Lack of Follower Support
Lack of Professional Development
Lack of Shared Governance
Lack of Transparency
Micromanagement
Other
Colleagues
Lack of Advancement Opportunities
Lack of Resources
No Support from Institutional Administration
Poor Compensation
Poor Physical Environment
Work Overload

Library leadership should provide opportunities for professional growth and development for their followers, encouraging academic librarians to engage in continuing education, and actively participate in these initiatives themselves (Fyn et al., 2019; Heady et al., 2020; Luzius & Ard, 2006; Markgren et al., 2007). Professional development and continuing education have been highlighted in the professional literature as effective strategies for reducing work-related burnout which may positively impact turnover rates (Ferriero & Powers 1982; Fyn et al., 2019; Griggs-Taylor & Lee, 2022; Heady et al., 2020; Hogarth, 2017; Kane, 2018).

As mentioned, not only should academic librarians be engaging in professional development and continuing education, but it is also crucial for current and future leaders to do

so as well. Unqualified leadership was referenced numerous times as a contributor to work-related burnout in this study on the Academic Librarian Leadership and Burnout Survey and then again during the interviews. Open-ended Question 1 provoked statements about unqualified library leadership that included “lack of leadership skills” (Respondent 140), “lack of knowledge of current librarianship” (Respondent 147), “little knowledge of current library work or operations” (Respondent 406), and “lack of knowledge management” (Respondent 432). Interviewee 4 mentioned promoting colleagues from within the library with “no prior experience in leadership,” and indicated the lack of leadership experience in the newly appointed library director directly impacted their experience with work-related burnout. Interviewee 13 bemoaned the unpreparedness of library leadership by stating, “so many library administrators are not taught about leadership.”

For library leadership development, Kaufman et al. (2023) suggested creating training programs that help current and future library leaders implement transformational leadership strategies to address librarian turnover. Research has demonstrated that transformational leadership is well-suited to today’s library environment and that it has the potential to reduce work-related burnout in academic librarians (Del Rio et al., 2022; Fancher, 2022; Garczynski et al., 2022; Martin, 2016; Miles & Markgren, 2022; Nardine; 2019; Phillips, 2014). Kouzes and Posner’s (2023) conceptualization of transformational leadership should be considered when designing and implementing training and programs for current and future academic library leaders. Kouzes and Posner advocated for mentoring as an essential component of leadership development, specifically highlighting the Enable Others to Act leadership practice which empowers and supports others through coaching and mentoring, building trust, fostering collaboration, and developing the potential within institutions. Leadership mentoring has the

potential to provide structured opportunities for current and future leadership to grow personally and professionally under the guidance of more experienced leaders contributing to skill development, networking, and succession planning. Mentoring programs should also be available to academic librarians; they were presented in the literature as a recommendation for curbing turnover with new and mid-level academic librarians (Heady et al., 2020; Knight, 2013; Markgren et al., 2007).

Sex and Race

This study found that sex and race were not significant factors in predicting work-related burnout among academic librarians in the southeastern United States. However, the burnout literature presented conflicted views on the role these demographics may play in influencing work-related burnout among librarians, with some studies reporting a potential impact while others finding no significant relationship (Adebayo et al., 2018; Agyei et al., 2019; Bynoe & Coates, 2022; Colon-Aguirre & Webb, 2020; Galbraith et al., 2016; Lo & Herman, 2017; Nardine, 2019; Wood et al., 2020). Adebayo et al. (2018) related sex had no effect on occupational burnout in library personnel in academic libraries. Agyei et al. (2019) uncovered no significant difference between males and females regarding the MBI subscale averages, despite males consistently scoring higher in each. Galbraith et al. (2016) found nonfaculty female librarians had similar levels of stress to their male coworkers. Nardine (2019) assessed burnout in 2,069 academic liaison librarians using the MBI; a t-test on the data revealed no statistically significant difference between male and female scores. However, Wood et al. (2020) reported a statistically significant higher level of burnout in females when they assessed work-related burnout in academic librarians, noting gender as the primary variable in the prediction of

burnout. Wood et al. posited the higher levels of work-related burnout in females could be due to familial responsibilities.

Colon-Aguirre and Webb (2020) found no evidence that race represented a significant effect on burnout in academic librarians. In contrast, other studies have related that race does impact low morale and work-related burnout (Bynoe & Coates, 2022; Kendrick & Damasco, 2019). Bynoe and Coates (2022) noted burnout in Black female academic librarians was amplified during the COVID-19 pandemic due to race disparities and inequities within higher education. Kendrick and Damasco's (2019) experiential study validated the low-morale experience of racial and ethnic minority academic librarians. As noted, low morale may be an early warning sign of work-related burnout, rendering librarians disengaged and demotivated (Kendrick, 2017; Kennedy & Garewal, 2020; McCormack & Cotter, 2013; Ortega, 2017).

Total Work-Related Burnout Score (TWRBS)

In the southeastern region of the United States, the average TWRBS for academic librarians was 47.57, reflecting a substantial level of work-related burnout among respondents. This finding was consistent with other studies that used the same subscale of the CBI to measure work-related burnout in academic librarians (Demetres et al., 2020; Wood et al., 2020). This seven-item questionnaire uses a Likert scale to assess the extent of burnout an individual is experiencing in relation to their job, focusing on the frequency of physical exhaustion from work, feeling drained at the end of a working day or week, and experiencing burnout directly tied to job demands.

A large proportion of academic librarians reported feeling fatigued by the end of their workday (77.8%). Approximately 55% of respondents indicated they woke up exhausted, dreading another day at work. Additionally, 42% of respondents indicated they found every

working hour tiring, either always, often, or sometimes. While not all respondents experienced continuous exhaustion, these findings indicated extreme fatigue for many, which could be linked to factors such as understaffing or work overload. Academic librarians proffered both of these factors in their responses to the open-ended questions on the Academic Librarian Leadership and Burnout Survey and reiterated them in answers to the interview questions. When prompted on the survey to describe leadership practices that contributed to work-related burnout in the academic library, respondents cited workload 67 times and being short staffed 40 times. Likewise, when asked on the survey to describe leadership practices that mitigated work-related burnout in the academic library, the respondents indicated proper workloads (45 mentions) and appropriate staffing (28 mentions). Similar sentiments were expressed during the follow-up interviews. During the 17 interviews conducted, workload and staffing were mentioned 17 different times. Interviewee 1 indicated they were not burned out in their current position due to the department being “fully staffed.” Interviewee 4 expressed, “I wear many hats, which I’m sure other librarians do, but for me that’s quickly leading to burnout . . . I feel like I’m drowning with work.” Interviewee 14 indicated the need for more staffing and described their workload as a contributor to work-related burnout:

I support three different departments, and I have supported up to seven departments before. I definitely have a really heavy teaching load, and I do a lot of individual research consultations and work with faculty and students on their research in groups and individually. I stay busy and it’s easy to get burned out, especially in the fall.

When asked if they had enough energy for family and friends during leisure time, 45.1% indicated sometimes and 16.5% indicated they never or almost never have enough time for family and friends. These results suggested work-life balance may be a concern. Many academic

librarians may be prioritizing work at the expense of their personal lives or struggling to find the energy to engage in meaningful relationships outside of the academic library. Support from library leadership regarding work-life balance, or the lack thereof, was referenced 57 times in the responses to the open-ended questions on the Academic Librarian Leadership and Burnout Survey. Of the 17 interviewees, four mentioned work-life balance when asked about their experiences with work-related burnout in the academic library. Interviewee 8 shared that having supportive library leadership in terms of work-life balance has helped decrease their work-related burnout. The individual explained:

I will say that I think a big reason I'm not feeling as burned out here as I did at my last position is that we get a work from home day once a week. Work-life balance is much better now that I just get one day where I can sit at my dining room table with my dog at my feet and my coffee next to me and the window open and I'm working that way.

When discussing experience with work-related burnout, Interviewee 12 noted that an increase in job duties resulted in "feeling like I need to bring work home with me . . . a boundary I was trying to be very careful to not cross when I started in this position."

At least 70% of the respondents reported experiencing some degree of emotional exhaustion related to their roles in the academic library. This exhaustion was described in various ways during the interviews. For example, when discussing burnout caused by "the demands of being a user librarian" and supporting graduate students, Interviewee 2 shared, "I found myself stressed about fulfilling their information needs. But I also found myself mentally tired, so I had to really make an effort, a systematic effort towards addressing the questions." Interviewee 10 reflected, "I have felt hopeless, overwhelmed, disappointed, and detached." Interviewee 12 explained, "My brain is on all the time. I don't really have a chance to just like,

fully relax my brain and body. And it, you know, is making me increasingly tired and a bit, you know, more irritated.” Work-related frustration was reported as occurring frequently with nearly 78% of academic librarians indicating that they experienced it at least sometimes. Interviewee 8 shared, “In terms of how this all made me feel, I was frustrated to the point of applying for a new job in the area and seriously considering leaving the profession.” Interviewee 11 expressed frustration with belonging to a “flat organization” where there “really wasn’t an opportunity to move up,” saying, “I grew very frustrated with that. And you know, kind of burnt out on what I was doing, and it made me feel really very frustrated and just tired of going to work.”

Finally, when asked outright if respondents felt burnt out because of their work, around 33% were experiencing work-related burnout regularly, while 36.5% were experiencing it sometimes. Only 30.2% of respondents indicated they seldom or never experienced work-related burnout. These results strongly indicate that work-related burnout is a widespread concern in southeastern academic librarians, with many experiencing high levels of fatigue at the end of the day, difficulties balancing work and personal life, emotional exhaustion, and work-related frustration, resulting in the majority of respondents self-identifying as being burnt out.

Leadership Practices Inventory: Observer (LPI: Observer)

Research in the professional literature has consistently linked low morale and work-related burnout in librarians to library leadership practices (Del Rio et al., 2022; Fic & Albro, 2022; Glusker et al., 2022; Kendrick, 2017; Kennedy & Garewal, 2020; McCormack & Cotter, 2013; Ortega, 2017; Weyant et al., 2021a). When assessed using the LPI: Observer, the average LPI: Observer score for the respondents in this study was 6.36, indicating that many of their academic library leaders were exhibiting the five exemplary leadership behaviors outlined by

Kouzes and Posner (2023) either sometimes or fairly often. These five behaviors included the following:

- Model the Way: Leadership sets an example by aligning their actions with shared values.
- Inspire a Shared Vision: Leadership envisions an optimistic future and unites followers around this vision.
- Challenge the Process: Leadership seeks new and innovative ways to improve an organization which may involve taking calculated risks.
- Enable Others to Act: Leadership encourages and empowers followers to contribute their best work.
- Encourage the Heart: Leadership recognizes and celebrates individual and team contributions to reinforce commitment.

When broken down by leadership practice, Enable Others to Act (7.05) had the highest average, followed by Encourage the Heart (6.53), Model the Way (6.22), Challenge the Process (6.10), and Inspire a Shared Vision (5.92). These LPI: Observer averages reflected academic librarians' perceptions of their library leadership, suggesting that these leadership practices were being exhibited more often than not. However, there is still potential for enhancement. The appeal of using this framework within the academic library is that it allows library leadership to purposefully and intentionally engage in these leadership practices, thereby cultivating a work environment that actively reduces the risk of work-related burnout. Kouzes and Posner's (2023) practical and straightforward recommendations for applying their leadership framework in the workplace, which were supported by the library leadership literature, should be applied within the academic library as follows:

- **Model the Way** - Library leadership clarifies and aligns values by identifying and communicating personal and institutional values, ensuring that their actions consistently reflect these principles. By demonstrating a strong commitment to the library's and their institution's mission and values, library leaders set an example and guide academic librarians through their own behavior. They must be authentic in their leadership by being transparent within the library and advocating for transparency within their broader institution. Additionally, effective library leadership should regularly engage in conversations with academic librarians, seeking their input and feedback on ways to improve leadership within the academic library setting (American Library Association, 2016; Ammons-Stephens et al., 2009; Griggs-Taylor & Lee, 2022; Jordan, 2012; Le, 2015; Martin, 2016, 2018, 2020; McAuliffe et al., 2019; McCormack & Cotter, 2013; Miles & Markgren, 2022; Wong, 2019).
- **Inspire a Shared Vision** - Library leadership communicates a compelling vision for the academic library, presenting an engaging picture of its future. By aligning their own values with those of academic librarians, library leadership should connect the vision to the values and aspirations of their followers and the institution at large. Effective library leadership engages academic librarians by involving them in shaping the shared vision and encouraging them to recognize the importance of their work in achieving the larger goal. Furthermore, library leaders engage in ongoing conversations with academic librarians, seeking recommendations for the best strategies to achieve their shared vision (American Library Association, 2016; Ashiq et al., 2021; Aslam, 2018; Jordan, 2012; Kaufman et al., 2023; Le, 2015; Martin, 2016, 2018, 2020).

- **Challenge the Process** - Library leadership cultivates a work environment that encourages experimentation, where academic librarians can learn by trying new things, taking risks, and even making mistakes. By leading through example and promoting new ways of thinking, library leadership remains open to change and innovation, challenging the status quo. Library leadership proactively identifies opportunities for improvement by supporting the ongoing growth and development of academic librarians. This involves regular collaboration with academic librarians to assess workflows and processes, aiming to enhance overall efficiency. Library leadership further supports academic librarians by granting them the freedom to explore new ideas and approaches in their job duties. Additionally, maintaining open communication with academic librarians is crucial, actively pursuing conversations with them to determine the best ways to support their efforts as they investigate new strategies to achieve their goals (American Library Association, 2016; Ammons-Stephens et al., 2009; Ashiq et al., 2021; Jordan, 2012; Kaufman et al., 2023; Martin, 2016, 2018; McCormack & Cotter, 2013; Weyant et al., 2021b; Wong, 2019).
- **Enable Others to Act** - Library leadership fosters collaboration by promoting an environment where academic librarians work together towards shared goals. By demonstrating confidence in their abilities and offering autonomy in decision-making, library leadership builds trust among academic librarians. Moreover, they should provide the necessary resources and support to ensure their academic librarians' success. It is important that library leadership encourages their academic librarians' professional growth through regular feedback, mentoring, and varied professional development opportunities. Finally, maintaining an open dialogue with academic librarians is essential,

allowing library leadership to better understand how to support a collegial environment that strengthens the team and encourages collaboration (Ammons-Stephens et al., 2009; Jordan, 2012; Martin, 2018; McCormack & Cotter, 2013; Miles & Markgren, 2022; Wong, 2019).

- Encourage the Heart - Library leadership celebrates the achievements of academic librarians by consistently acknowledging individual and team accomplishments. By offering genuine praise and celebratory events for their efforts and results, library leadership shows deep appreciation for the hard work and dedication of their academic librarians. To address morale, it is extremely important during challenging times that library leadership provides encouragement through positive energy and motivation. In addition, library leadership should seek to nurture a culture of recognition within the academic library by encouraging librarians to celebrate the successes of their colleagues, thus promoting a supportive and appreciative workplace culture. To further strengthen this sense of community, library leadership engages in regular dialogue with academic librarians, gathering insights on how to enhance the spirit of collaboration and camaraderie within the academic library (Ammons-Stephens et al., 2009; Jordan, 2012; Kaufman et al., 2023; Martin, 2018; McCormack & Cotter, 2013; Weyant et al., 2021b; Wong, 2019).

This study found a significant linear relationship between the LPI: Observer composite scores and TWRBSs. As the LPI: Observer composite scores increased, TWRBSs tended to decrease. In other words, higher leadership behavior scores were associated with lower burnout scores, but the relationship was not very strong. The LPI: Observer composite scores accounted for only about 15% of the variance in TWRBSs, indicating that other factors not considered in

this analysis may have a weighty influence on the prediction of TWRBSs. This was confirmed during the analyses of the two open-ended questions and the follow-up interviews. When the responses to the open-ended questions were combined, the Other category accounted for 31% of the responses on the Academic Librarian Leadership and Burnout Survey. The analysis of the semi-structured interview transcripts revealed Other factors (36%) outside the control of library leadership control appeared to have a marked effect on work-related burnout in academic libraries.

Academic Librarians and Work-Related Burnout

While survey respondents and interviewees shared varied perspectives and experiences regarding work-related burnout in academic libraries, the analyses consistently highlighted two leadership practices from Kouzes and Posner (2023) as being strongly associated with library leadership's influence on work-related burnout: Enable Others to Act and Model the Way. However, both groups also reported Other factors, which are those not captured by Kouzes and Posner's leadership practices and are potentially beyond the control of library leadership, as impacting work-related burnout. For the interviewees, these Other factors had the greatest impact on work-related burnout in the academic library (see Table 37).

It is important to emphasize the distinction between the questions posed to the survey respondents and those posed to the interviewees. The survey respondents were asked to describe library leadership practices that contributed to and mitigated work-related burnout in academic libraries. In contrast, the interviewees were not specifically asked to pinpoint leadership practices related to burnout. Instead, they were asked to recount any instances of burnout they had encountered in their current roles within the academic library, how library leadership practices

impacted their experiences with burnout, how these experiences made them feel, and to provide specific examples.

Table 37

Comparison of Top Three Factors Impacting Work-Related Burnout

Procedure	Leadership Practice	Percentage
Open-Ended Questions	Enable Others to Act	32%
	Model the Way	22%
	Other (e.g., workload, staffing)	15.5%
Interviews	Other (e.g., workload, staffing)	36%
	Enable Others to Act	24%
	Model the Way	16%

Thematic analyses of open-ended Question 1 and Question 2 revealed six prevalent subthemes: leadership behaviors, communication, autonomy, follower support, governance structures, and environmental factors. These subthemes were directly related to leadership practices that either contributed to or mitigated work-related burnout in academic librarians.

Positive leadership behaviors, such as sincerity, fairness, and transparency, provided the foundation for leadership practices that tempered work-related burnout. These behaviors enabled trust and open communication, permitting library leaders to truly understand and respond to the needs of their academic librarians. Negative leadership behaviors, such as toxicity, manipulation, and avoidance, were identified as a primary contributor to work-related burnout among academic librarians. Good communication, characterized by active listening and frequent, clear messaging, strengthened the leader-follower relationship, ensuring librarians felt heard and valued.

Communication deficiencies, often stemming from poor leadership behaviors, increased work-related burnout through ineffective and unprofessional interactions. These included failures to listen, instances of verbal abuse, and the avoidance of difficult but necessary conversations.

Appropriate autonomy, characterized by flexibility, trust, and the absence of micromanagement, allowed academic librarians to take ownership of their work and to contribute meaningfully,

increasing job satisfaction and reducing feelings of cynicism and inefficacy. Whereas autonomy limitations often manifested as academic librarians repeatedly citing that their leadership prohibited risk-taking, demonstrated inflexibility, and displayed a fundamental lack of trust in their professional capabilities, all of which contributed substantially to work-related burnout. Follower support, encompassing recognition, advocacy, and work-life balance support, further demonstrated that some library leaders were invested in the well-being of their librarians. Recognizing librarian achievements, advocating for library needs, and supporting work-life balance all contributed to a sense of value and belonging, attenuating work-related burnout, and empowering team members. Problematic governance structures greatly impacted academic librarian well-being, with respondents noting several issues: lack of collaboration, poor change management, and absent shared governance. These contributed to work-related burnout by disconnecting academic librarians from decision-making processes, leading them to feel powerless. This directly related to communication, autonomy, and follower support as academic librarians expressed feeling unheard, unable to make important decisions about their work, and unsupported by their library leadership. Finally, environmental factors, such as comfortable workspaces, adequate resources, appropriate staffing levels, and manageable workloads, established a physical and structural context conducive to librarians' well-being. This positive impact was strengthened through positive leadership behaviors including consistent and professional communication, granting appropriate autonomy, and providing support to academic librarians. Considering respondents' emphasis on shared governance, incorporating inclusive decision-making processes into library leadership practices would create a holistic approach that could help reduce work-related burnout among academic librarians.

Thematic analysis of the interview transcripts revealed environmental factors as the dominant contributor to work-related burnout among academic librarians, despite leadership behaviors being more prominent in the open-ended questions analyses. These environmental factors included work overload, with 11 interviewees relating excessive responsibilities and disregard for individual capacity limits. Inadequate staffing compounded this issue, with interviewees describing supporting multiple departments and functioning in understaffed academic libraries where many people juggle multiple jobs with little relief in sight. Lack of institutional administrative support materialized as feelings of powerlessness and devaluation. Resource scarcity forced librarians to do more with less, though proper compensation provided a potential buffer against work-related burnout for some interviewees. Colleague relationships served as both mitigators (through supportive networks) and contributors (through disparities in expertise and commitment) to work-related burnout conditions. Leadership behaviors formed the second critical subtheme, encompassing both positive behaviors that alleviated burnout and negative behaviors that exacerbated it. Positive leadership traits included understanding, consistency, fairness, trustworthiness, and tangible recognitions of effort, with interviewees specifically noting how compassionate leadership created psychological safety and helped with retention. Conversely, negative leadership behaviors accelerated burnout through leadership vacuums, poor communication, and resistance to innovation. Many librarians reported receiving minimal guidance from leadership and experiencing situations where requests for help went unanswered. Leadership's resistance to change and lack of appreciation contributed to a toxic culture where librarians felt disposable, stressed, overwhelmed, and disrespected, directly linking work-related burnout to library leadership practices.

Based on the responses to the open-ended questions and the interview data, the Kouzes and Posner's leadership practice that had the greatest impact on work-related burnout was Enable Others to Act. The academic librarians surveyed also identified this leadership practice as the most observed in their library leadership. The average LPI: Observer score reported for this leadership trait was 7.05, indicating that academic library leadership in the Southeast are actively practicing Enable Others to Act at a high level. This finding indicates that many academic library leaders are prioritizing empowerment and providing support to their academic librarians, which may help alleviate work-related burnout in the academic library setting. Table 38 lists the items that were categorized under the Enable Others to Act leadership practice and the number of mentions received for each open-ended question.

For survey respondents, micromanagement emerged as the most frequently cited factor contributing to work-related burnout among academic librarians. Respondent 29 noted that their library leadership was involved in "micromanagement of my daily tasks or long-term projects." Similarly, Respondent 133 highlighted "micromanagement, lack of trust, and rigid adoption of rules" as critical elements related to leadership practices contributing to their work-related burnout. In contrast, when asked about leadership practices that helped mitigate work-related burnout, academic librarians most often cited flexibility, autonomy, and shared governance, factors that are fundamentally antithetical to micromanagement. They emphasized the importance of library leadership offering "flexible work schedules and hybrid work schemes" (Respondent 371), granting librarians "autonomy with respect to their work tasks" (Respondent 363), fostering "trust in library employees" (Respondent 93), and building "a culture of trust and employee empowerment" (Respondent 104).

Table 38*Responses to Open-Ended Questions for Enable Others to Act*

Enable Others to Act			
OEQ1. Contributing	Frequency	OEQ2. Mitigating	Frequency
Micromanagement	77	Flexibility	58
Lack of Shared Governance	37	Autonomy	45
Lack of Supervision	33	Shared Governance	36
Lack of Transparency	29	Transparency	35
Lack of Follower Support	28	Proper Supervision	33
Unrealistic Expectations	23	Follower Support	28
Inflexibility	21	Professional Development	28
Lack of Communication	15.4	Trust in Followers	25
Lack of Trust in Followers	13	Collaboration	24
Lack of Professional Development	13	Good Communication	19.8
Unclear Expectations	12	No Micromanagement	11
Role Ambiguity	10	Realistic Expectations	9
Lack of Autonomy	9	Good Project Management	8
Lack of Collaboration	7	Role Clarity	4
		Mentoring	2

Note. Due to the large role communication plays in each of the five leadership practices, it was divided up evenly between them. This resulted in decimal numbers for Lack of Communication and Good Communication.

Micromanagement restricts flexibility by demanding rigid adherence to specific instructions or processes, leaving little space for librarians to adapt to the dynamic work environment found in academic libraries or to engage in creative problem-solving. It also undermines autonomy by depriving academic librarians' ownership of their areas of responsibility, signaling a lack of trust from academic library leadership. Furthermore, micromanagement contradicts the tenets of shared governance by centralizing authority and diminishing the collaborative, democratic nature promoted by shared governance. Academic library leaders who engage in micromanagement, create a stifling work environment contributing to low morale, work-related burnout, and high turnover rates (Fyn et al., 2019; Heady et al., 2020; Kendrick, 2017; Kennedy & Garewal, 2020; McCormack & Cotter, 2013; Weyant et al.,

2021a). A culture of trust and support with minimal micromanagement fosters engagement, innovation, adaptability, and sense of shared responsibility, all of which help reduce work-related burnout (Kennedy & Garewal, 2020; Kouzes & Posner, 2023; Martin, 2016, 2018, 2020; Maslach & Leiter, 2022; McAuliffe et al., 2019; McCormack & Cotter, 2013).

Table 39 presents the interviewees' responses categorized under the leadership practice Enable Others to Act. The leadership action most frequently mentioned by the interviewees was the lack of support provided to followers. Interviewees shared their frustration with this inadequate support provided by their academic library leadership. For Interviewee 10, the lack of support was a major contributing factor to their experience with work-related burnout. Several statements reflected this, such as, "I could go to leadership and ask for help or support and not get it," "too much is expected, too many tasks, not enough support," and "very little training, very little explanation, very little documentation. And you know, just expecting you to figure it out." Interviewee 12 related, "I feel like a lot of administrators, at the library level and at the university level talk about how we should be, you know, practicing self-care and balancing things, while not providing the type of support that is actually helpful." This finding is consistent with the conclusions found in library leadership literature, which emphasized that supportive leadership was essential in preventing and alleviating work-related burnout and ultimately turnover (Del Rio et al., 2022; Fancher, 2022; Garczynski et al., 2022; Glusker et al., 2022; Heady et al., 2020; Miles & Markgren, 2022; Nardine, 2019; Shupe et al., 2015; Townsend & Bugg, 2020; Weyant et al., 2021b).

The second Kouzes and Posner's leadership practice ranking among the top three factors impacting work-related burnout in the academic library was Model the Way. The average LPI: Observer score for this leadership practice was 6.22, suggesting that academic library leaders are

demonstrating a moderate level of commitment to lead by example. This score reflects a fair emphasis on setting clear standards and values, both of which can influence the work environment in the academic library and the academic librarians’ experiences with work-related burnout. Table 40 lists the items that were categorized under the Model the Way leadership practice and the number of mentions received for each open-ended question.

Table 39

Interviewee Responses for Enable Others to Act

Enable Others to Act	
Interviewee Transcripts	Frequency
Follower Support	6
Lack of Shared Governance	3
Supervision	3
Flexibility	2
Lack of Communication	1.67
Role Ambiguity	1
Unrealistic Expectations	1
No Micromanagement	1
Lack of Professional Development	1
Lack of Transparency	1

Note. Due to the large role communication plays in each of the five leadership practices, it was divided up evenly between them. This resulted in a decimal number for Lack of Communication.

In the open-ended responses on the Academic Librarian Leadership and Burnout Survey, leadership behaviors were most frequently identified as having a significant impact on work-related burnout, followed by leadership attitudes. Specifically, favoritism and unfairness were often cited as primary drivers. In regard to promotion or advancement within the academic library, Respondent 6 noted that library leadership was “promoting employees who are simply ‘yes men/women,’” while Respondent 12 observed, “people in favor get a lot of praise and people out of favor get blocked from advancement.” Several other respondents also highlighted favoritism within the academic library, leading to comments such as “high expectations for some

are not the same for others” (Respondent 89), “not holding all to the same standards” (Respondent 194), and “not having consistent expectations for all employees” (Respondent 365). Fairness was also underscored when respondents were asked to describe leadership practices that help mitigate work-related burnout in the academic library. Respondent 175 expressed a desire for “a level playing field for opportunities” and Respondent 271 emphasized the importance of “treating employees equitably” by “not playing favorites.”

Table 40

Responses to Open-Ended Questions for Model the Way

Model the Way			
OEQ1. Contributing	Frequency	OEQ2. Mitigating	Frequency
Negative Leadership Behaviors	197	Positive Leadership Behaviors	113
Negative Leadership Attitudes	40	Positive Leadership Attitudes	26
Unqualified Leadership	21	Good Communication	19.8
Lack of Communication	15.4	Receives Feedback	18
Lack of Shared Values	2	Qualified Leadership	12
		Resolves Conflict	9
		Shared Values	4

Note. Due to the large role communication plays in each of the five leadership practices, it was divided up evenly between them. This resulted in decimal numbers for Lack of Communication and Good Communication.

Professional literature has emphasized the importance of fairness in the workplace and its effect on work-related burnout (Leiter & Maslach, 2005; Maslach & Leiter, 2022; McCormack & Cotter, 2013). Fair leadership cultivates trust among followers, strengthening work relationships, promoting engagement, and encouraging mutual respect which in turn enhances loyalty (Kouzes & Posner, 2023; Maslach & Leiter, 1997). Leaders prioritizing fairness contribute to a positive organizational culture, laying the foundation for long-term success by fostering an environment where followers are more likely to stay, grow professionally, and contribute to the organization’s mission. In library publications, it has been recognized that when

library leadership treats academic librarians fairly, it creates a cohesive and collaborative work environment, ultimately reducing stress and burnout while promoting librarian retention (Fyn et al., 2019; Kaufman et al., 2023; Miles & Markgren, 2022; Weyant et al. 2021a).

Table 41 presents the interviewees' responses categorized under the leadership practice Model the Way. Under the Model the Way leadership practice, interviewees most frequently discussed negative library leadership behaviors when reflecting on their experiences with work-related burnout in the academic library setting. Favoritism was again cited as a negative leadership behavior exhibited by library leadership. Interviewee 6 shared their burnout experience involving an incoming dean, noting, "once he started hiring his own people, the people that he had inherited were not his people" and added, "it also seemed difficult for him to want to include me in the things he was starting." However, interviewees also indicated that their library leaders were often unqualified and ignorant of what their followers' positions required. Interviewee 4 noted that their leadership "had no prior experience in leadership." Others echoed this sentiment bemoaning the lack of leadership training with one interviewee noting, "so many library administrators are not taught about leadership" (Interviewee 13). Interviewee 7 expressed their library leadership "had no sense of what my work looks like, nor showed any interest in finding out." Interviewee 10 voiced frustration with their library leader's "lack of understanding of what I do daily." Interviewee 14 shared an experience with their new dean's lack of awareness regarding academic librarians' faculty status stating they "came from an institution that had staff and did not have faculty, and she has never made any attempt to understand our faculty status."

The concept of Model the Way as an essential leadership practice for academic library leaders is widely recognized in professional literature (American Library Association, 2016; Martin, 2018; Wong, 2019). This practice is rooted in the idea that effective leaders serve as

competent, informed role models, exhibiting the values and the behaviors they wish to see reflected in their teams (Kouzes & Posner, 2023). In the context of academic libraries, where library leadership guides a diverse group of staff and faculty in navigating complex and dynamic environments, being a strong role model is crucial for fostering trust, innovation, and collaboration. By demonstrating fairness and setting the tone for a culture of respect, library leaders can help alleviate work-related burnout, ensuring that staff feel valued, engaged, and motivated rather than overwhelmed (Fancher, 2022). Finally, library leaders must actively and regularly engage with their team members to gain a thorough understanding of their job responsibilities to provide the most effective support.

Table 41

Interviewee Responses for Model the Way

Model the Way	
Interviewee Transcripts	Frequency
Leadership Behaviors	7
Unqualified Leadership	5
Lack of Communication	1.67

Note. Due to the large role communication plays in each of the five leadership practices, it was divided up evenly between them. this resulted in a decimal number for Lack of Communication.

As mentioned, other factors not accounted for in Kouzes and Posner’s leadership practices and possibly outside the control of library leadership were consistently ranked among the top three items impacting work-related burnout in academic librarians. Notably, both survey respondents and interviewees identified work overload and staffing as the top two factors (see Table 42). Respondent 19 shared, “My library is vastly understaffed for a major research library. We all have too much work and not enough people to do it, so it’s easy to burnout under the demands to get necessary functions done.” Respondent 216 pointed to the “overextension of staff due to attrition and turnover” as a contributor to work-related burnout. Respondent 141 reasoned

“because many librarians are natural ‘helpers,’ sometimes leaders take advantage of our natural tendency to pitch in and do extra work.”

Although workload and staffing are closely related, they were considered separate factors for this study. Nonetheless, several survey respondents linked the two. Respondent 269 stated, “unsustainable workload expectations due to staffing shortages,” while Respondent 289 insisted that a contributor to work-related burnout in the academic library was “librarians’ own drive to take on more and more or gradual job responsibility creep as people leave positions and they are not backfilled.” Many respondents referred to the “do more with less” mentality that often pervades academic libraries. Suggestions to mitigate work-related burnout included “hiring more librarians to equalize the workload” (Respondent 68), “taking recommendations for staffing more seriously,” (Respondent 95), and “filling vacant positions” (Respondent 97).

Table 42

Responses to Open-Ended Questions for Other

OEQ1. Contributing	Other Factors		Frequency
	Frequency	OEQ2. Mitigating	
Work Overload	67	Proper Workloads	45
Short Staffed	40	Appropriate Staffing	28
Poor Compensation	26	Proper Compensation	27
Lack of Resources	23	Advancement Opportunities	12
No Support from		Variety of Tasks	11
Institutional Administration	21	Proper Resources	6
Lack of Opportunities		Support from	
for Advancement	8	Institutional Administration	6
Tenure	4	Proper Physical Environment	4
Repetitiveness of Job	3	Tenure	4
Poor Physical Environment	1		

During the interviews, work overload and staffing were again prominent topics.

Interviewee 5 described the first-year instruction initiative, which led academic librarians to conduct “hundreds of freshman classes for a library experience,” resulting in “folks doing five to

six classes a day” of “basically reading through a script with kids that don’t want to be there.” Interviewee 7 shared their experience of work-related burnout caused by their library leader’s “disregard for workload and capacity.” Interviewee 12 pointed to job creep as a source of work overload, explaining how temporary situations evolve into more permanent responsibilities, “it’s a case of like things just creeping onto the plate, sometimes presented as like, oh, this is a temporary thing. oh, we just need interim coverage until you know, like we hire someone and then they don’t get hired and oh, but you’re doing it so well.” Interviewee 14 reflected, “I definitely have a really heavy teaching load, and I do a lot of individual research consultations and work with faculty and students on their research in groups and individually. I stay busy and it’s easy to get burned out, especially in the fall.”

The importance of adequate staffing and manageable workloads, along with their impact on followers in the workplace, has been widely acknowledged in the professional literature (Johnson & Page, 2022; Kendrick, 2017; Kennedy & Garewal, 2020; Leiter & Maslach, 2005; McCormack & Cotter, 2013). While these factors are often beyond the direct control of academic library leadership, it is essential that they actively push for sufficient staffing to ensure workloads are fairly distributed among academic librarians, helping to alleviate work-related burnout. Academic library leadership should take a proactive approach to addressing staffing shortages by advocating for timely hires and collaborating with human resource departments to streamline the hiring and onboarding processes. Furthermore, library leadership must acknowledge the negative effects of understaffing on team morale and work-related burnout and actively work to cultivate a supportive culture when positions remain empty.

During the interviews, a new contributor to work-related burnout in academic libraries emerged: colleagues (see Table 43). Interviewee 2 highlighted the impact of unqualified

colleagues on academic librarians leaving the field, stating, “Unless we have a serious conversation about equalizing the knowledge level of liaisons within academic libraries more and more liaisons like me, I believe will leave the field because they feel their colleagues’ expertise is not as solid as they would expect.” Interviewee 9 reflected on how colleagues contributed to their own work-related burnout, stating, “Some of the burnout I’ve seen in myself and from other colleagues can be trying to make up for where other people maybe aren’t as committed or dedicated.” Interviewee 12 described struggling to complete daily tasks due to a “coworker, sort of creeping in to take up time,” wanting to discuss conflict issues they were having with other library staff. Albro and Fic (2022) explored coworker-induced burnout in their publication, noting the impact of work relationships on both mental and physical health, as well as turnover. To address this issue, they recommended that library leadership fosters a workplace environment that promotes emotional intelligence, conducting regular stress assessments, and establishing clear behavioral expectations. Additionally, they emphasized the importance of creating an environment where open and honest communication can take place.

Finally, both survey respondents and interviewees stressed the importance of effective communication in relation to work-related burnout. Kouzes and Posner (2023) emphasized the importance of healthy communication across all five of their five leadership practices, making it difficult to attribute communication to just one specific practice. Therefore, the communication totals were distributed evenly across the five practices. Survey respondents cited poor or absent communication as a factor contributing to work-related burnout 77 times, while good communication was mentioned 99 times as a way to reduce work-related burnout. Interviewees referenced a lack of communication three times in connection with their work-related burnout experiences. These findings align with longstanding observations in the professional literature

regarding the essential role of communication skills in library leadership and their connection to preventing and alleviating low morale and work-related burnout (Albro & Fic, 2022; Ammons-Stephens et al., 2009; Behrend, 2022; Garczynski et al., 2022; Jordan, 2012; Kaufman et al., 2023; Le, 2015; Martin, 2018; McAuliffe et al., 2019; McCormack & Cotter, 2013; Shupe et al., 2015; Weiner, 2003; Weyant et al., 2021b; Wong, 2019).

Table 43

Interviewee Responses for Other Factors

Other Factors	Frequency
Interviewee Transcripts	
Work Overload	11
Staffing	6
Colleagues	3
Lack of Opportunities for Advancement	2
Lack of Resources	2
Poor Compensation	2
Repetitiveness of Job	2
No Support from Institutional Administration	1

Implications of the Results

If work-related burnout is left unaddressed, it can lead to severe and costly repercussions for both individuals and institutions (Garczynski et al., 2022). Academic librarians are currently grappling with work-related burnout, which adversely affects their job performance, mental and physical health, attendance, retention, and the overall culture of academic libraries. For this reason, it would be harmful for MLIS-granting institutions, professional library organizations, library leadership, and institutional administration to ignore the issue. Each of these groups has a vital role to play in prevention and alleviating work-related burnout in academic libraries.

First and foremost, it is crucial for library science programs at MLIS-granting institutions to adequately prepare future librarians for their careers (Affleck, 1996; Julien et al., 2022; Lundstrom et al., 2021; Martin, 2018, 2020; Petek, 2018). Insufficient preparation of library

professionals leaves them vulnerable to work-related burnout in their careers. When individuals are underprepared for their new roles within the academic library, it can create a harmful cycle where rising stress, diminished confidence, and overwhelming workloads contribute to work-related burnout. Beyond foundational librarianship knowledge, Christian (2015) recommended integrating emotional labor, emotional intelligence, and burnout management strategies into the curriculum of library science programs. However, the responsibility of MLIS-granting institutions does not end at graduation. Library schools and other library related agencies should provide a variety of continuing education opportunities.

Professional library organizations also play a vital role in supporting the field of librarianship by offering services and benefits that promote the development, recognition, and sustainability of the profession. These organizations must actively support academic librarians currently serving at higher education institutions by providing accessible and relevant continuing education focused on preventing and managing work-related burnout, benefiting both academic librarians and library leadership. Such professional development opportunities should include training sessions, workshops, certification programs, and mentorship initiatives. Additionally, courses aimed at developing leadership skills should be made available.

A systematic literature review by Ashiq et al. (2021) emphasized that the development of library leadership skills has been largely neglected, a concern given that ongoing professional development was considered the most effective method for cultivating these skills (Aslam, 2018; Jordan, 2012; Kaufman et al., 2023; Le, 2015; Martin, 2020; Oud, 2008). This view was also echoed by numerous survey respondents and interviewees. For instance, Respondent 233 stated the following:

I feel like lack of training/lack of professional development in management skills for library leaders have contributed to work-related burnout in academic libraries. Some personnel and building management issues would have been resolved sooner had management had practical training. We don't get that in library school!

Similarly, Interviewee 13 expressed, "So many library administrators are not taught about leadership and like how do you get everybody agreeing on a goal and focusing on that and achieving it."

While all levels of library leadership should participate in continuing education, special focus must be placed on mid-level leadership to prepare them for potential future roles in higher administration. Mentoring mid-level library leadership can significantly contribute to the development of future leaders, facilitating smooth transitions during inevitable leadership changes. This is particularly important, as periods of leadership transition have been shown to exacerbate work-related burnout among librarians (Ashiq et al., 2021; Del Rio et al., 2022; Garczynski et al., 2022; Heady et al., 2020; Holt et al., 2022). Oftentimes, academic librarians inherit management positions due to convenience, situational factors, or organizational needs, rather than competence or genuine interest in the role (Kaufman et al., 2023). By investing in the professional growth and readiness of mid-level leaders, academic libraries will create a more resilient leadership pipeline, ensuring smooth and more sustainable transitions in the long term. Furthermore, these new library leaders will be better equipped to address the unique challenges of their roles, reducing the likelihood of work-related burnout and providing a more supportive and effective work environment for all library staff.

Secondly, academic library leadership must actively prevent and address work-related burnout by empowering academic librarians, leading by example, and advocating for the library

at the institutional level. This requires both direct actions and the cultivation of a supportive organizational culture. To begin, library leadership must recognize and support the emotional work inherent in academic librarians' interactions with students, faculty, and the community (Behrend, 2022; Johnson & Page, 2022). Regular burnout assessments and the implementation of targeted interventions aimed at reducing work-related stress are essential (Agyei et al., 2019; Christian, 2015; Fic & Albro, 2022; McCormack & Cotter, 2013; Sorondo, 2017). In addition, stress management training and continuous support have been found to be highly beneficial for academic librarians (Bartlett, 2018; Burke et al., 2009; Christian, 2015; McCormack & Cotter, 2013; Sorondo, 2017). Academic library leadership can enhance their organizational culture by prioritizing and addressing the emotional well-being of their academic librarians, enabling them to perform their roles more effectively.

Survey respondents and interviewees reported that when library leadership enables them to act, work-related burnout decreased. Enabling others to act requires trusting academic librarians to perform their professional roles without micromanagement. This approach promotes a sense of autonomy, signaling to academic librarians that their leadership trusts their ability to perform in a way that supports both the academic library and the affiliated institution (Dixon, 2022; Griggs-Taylor & Lee, 2022; Nardine, 2019; Oud, 2008). To proactively support this, library leadership should consider restructuring and clarifying job duties to reduce role stress, which can often lead to burnout. Addressing role stress and job creep, through job analyses and updated position descriptions can help elucidate expectations and reduce workplace stress (Adebayo et al., 2018; Affleck, 1996; Bartlett, 2018; Faulkner, 2015; Fic & Albro, 2022; Hogarth, 2017; Kantor, 2022; Oud, 2008; Shupe & Pung, 2011; Shupe et al., 2015; Wood et al., 2020). It also provides library leadership with the opportunity to assess workloads and ensure

they are evenly distributed. Additionally, involving academic librarians in these decision-making processes that directly affect them, establishing shared governance as a workplace standard, will further engage and empower them (Christian, 2015; Fancher, 2022; Fyn et al., 2019; Griggs-Taylor & Lee, 2022; McCormack & Cotter, 2013; Wood et al., 2020). Flexibility is also essential; academic librarians, as professionals, should be afforded flexibility to manage their work-life balance in a way that supports both their well-being and job satisfaction whenever possible. (Fyn et al., 2019; Garczynski et al., 2022; Griggs-Taylor & Lee, 2022; Holt et al., 2022; Johnson & Page, 2022; Kennedy & Garewal, 2020; McCormack & Cotter, 2013; Oud, 2008; Townsend & Bugg, 2020; Weeks et al., 2022; Wood et al., 2020). This holistic approach to leadership can significantly mitigate work-related burnout, promote long-term well-being and retention, and ultimately lead to more productive and engaged academic librarians (Del Rio et al., 2022; Toups, 2022).

Survey respondents and interviewees also noted that when library leadership effectively models the way, work-related burnout tends to decrease. To lead effectively, library leadership must be knowledgeable of library practices and possess the necessary qualifications for their roles. Qualified leadership is essential to combat work-related burnout and turnover, promoting a healthy work environment in the academic library (Heady. et al., 2020; Jordan, 2012; Kaufman et al., 2023; Le, 2014; Martin, 2018, 2020; McCormack & Cotter, 2013). However, competence alone is not sufficient for effective library leadership. Library leaders must do more than make decisions and manage librarians; they must embody the values, principles, and vision they wish to promote in the academic library. This requires aligning their daily actions with these ideals and demonstrating the behaviors they expect from academic librarians. When library leadership exhibits negative leadership behaviors creating an unhealthy work environment, it leads to work-

related burnout and turnover (Glusker et al., 2022; Heady et al., 2020; Kaufman et al., 2023; Luzius & Ard, 2006; Martin, 2020; Miles & Markgren, 2022; Ortega, 2017). Two leadership behaviors often cited in this study as contributing to work-related burnout in academic libraries were favoritism and conflict avoidance.

Academic librarians expect their leaders to treat everyone fairly, and when they fail to do this, work-related burnout can result. Respondent 80 noted their library leadership was “playing favorites with departments/workers,” while Respondent 89 observed, that some librarians faced “high expectations” more than others. Interviewee 5 pointed out issues with workload fairness, explaining that some academic librarians were “being given a somewhat lighter load for a semester or so,” which they felt was “not necessarily fair to folks” as it forced other academic librarians to take on the additional work. Library leadership must demonstrate fairness in the academic library by consistently applying policies and decisions and treating all academic librarians fairly. To do this, library leaders must recognize and address any biases, distribute workloads fairly, and offer equal opportunities for professional growth and development. Fairness in the academic library also involves providing support for diverse needs, recognizing contributions based on merit, and maintaining accountabilities for all. Library leadership must cultivate a culture of fairness, reducing inequities and promoting trust and collaboration in an effort to reduce work-related burnout and academic librarian turnover (Acadia & Vogt, 2023; Broussard, 2022; Bynoe & Coates, 2022; Del Rio et al., 2022; Fic & Albro, 2022; Fyn et al., 2019; Hogarth, 2017; Kaufman et al., 2023; Maslach & Leiter, 1997, 2022; McCormack & Cotter, 2013; Miles & Markgren, 2022; Toups, 2022).

Academic librarians also expect their library leadership to actively engage in conflict resolution. When leadership fails to properly address conflict within the academic library,

interpersonal tensions intensify, stress levels rise, and both morale and productivity may be impacted (Holt et al., 2022). These factors can all contribute to work-related burnout and lead to a toxic environment within the academic library. Respondent 78 expressed that their library leadership allowed “conflict and bullying among library staff to continue unchecked.” Respondent 358 suggested that a strategy for library leadership to reduce work-related burnout was “confronting and dealing with conflict resolution.” Respondent 410 acknowledged that their library leadership was unable “to face conflict/disagreement.” To address conflict effectively, library leadership must take a proactive approach through early recognition and open communication in an effort to prevent escalation (Jordan, 2012). Library leaders should actively listen to all parties seeking to clarify underlying issues and working to address root causes, either interpersonal or systemic. By taking these steps and being vigilant about conflicts within the academic library setting, leadership can effectively manage disputes, thereby reducing stress, preventing work-related burnout and addressing turnover (Albro & Fic, 2022; Baird et al. 2023; Del Rio et al., 2022; Heady et al., 2020; Kaufman et al., 2023; Kendrick, 2017; Kendrick & Damasco, 2019).

Modeling proper work-life balance by library leadership is essential for the well-being of academic librarians. This includes maintaining a reasonable 40-hour work week, appropriately using sick leave, and taking time off for vacations (Colon-Aguirre & Webb, 2022; Toups, 2022). The importance of modeling such behaviors is well-documented in the professional literature, with studies emphasizing the need for library leadership to set positive examples in maintaining a healthy balance between work and personal life (Ammons-Stephens et al., 2009; Fancher, 2022; Griggs-Taylor & Lee, 2022; Jordan, 2012; McCormack & Cotter, 2013). By prioritizing work-life balance and modeling it themselves, library leaders not only enhance the well-being of their

academic librarians but also promote an academic library culture that values self-care and sustainable work practices. This proactive approach ultimately helps reduce the risk of work-related burnout and contributes to a healthier work environment.

Finally, academic library leadership must have the support of institutional administration to effectively address work-related burnout occurring among academic librarians. As noted by survey respondents and interviewees, many of the factors contributing to work-related burnout lie beyond the control of library leadership. This is supported by existing professional literature (Fyn et al., 2019; Heady et al., 2020; Kaufman et al., 2023; Pope-Ruark, 2022). Researchers increasingly emphasized that tackling work-related burnout in libraries is not solely the responsibility of individual library leaders. While leadership plays a critical role in fostering a supportive work environment, the broader responsibility rests with the institutions themselves (Gewin, 2021; Townsend & Bugg, 2020; Weyant et al., 2021b). This will require the implementation of systemic changes that prioritize mental health, overall well-being, and work-life balance (Pope-Ruark, 2022). Library leadership must actively advocate for these institutional reforms in order to enhance their area of influence.

To start, institutions should focus on eliminating or improving organizational practices that contribute to work-related burnout. This includes improving human resource practices and policies at the institutional level (Adebayo et al., 2018; Colon-Aguirre & Webb, 2020; Griggs-Taylor & Lee, 2022; Marquez, 2023; Townsend & Bugg, 2020). A well-structured onboarding process is essential for new hires, assisting academic librarians to quickly integrate into the workplace. A comprehensive onboarding process not only acclimates new librarians with their work environment but also clarifies job expectations and emphasizes available social support, such as peer mentoring (Christian, 2015; Corbin, 2020; Heady et al., 2020; Keating & Cardenas,

2022; Oud, 2008). Transparency and honest communication are important during the onboarding process, particularly when it comes to open conversations about workplace dynamics and areas for improvement. Training and orientation programs are also useful for workplace transitions (Corbin, 2020; Oud, 2008). New academic librarians should be equipped with all the necessary information to thrive in their new work environment. This approach can contribute to their well-being, success, and long-term retention.

At the institutional level, a positive organizational culture should be fostered to support and enhance employee mental health and well-being. Workplace culture greatly impacts work-related burnout in academic libraries (Adebayo et al., 2018; Baird et al., 2023; Fic & Albro, 2022; Heady et al., 2020; Miles & Markgren, 2022; Oud, 2008; Townsend & Bugg, 2020). Promoting a healthy work environment at large should be a top priority for higher education institutions. Allocating funds for employee support programs, particularly those focused on health services and counseling, would benefit both academic librarians and the institution as a whole (Lundstrom et al., 2021). Early intervention for work-related burnout, through counseling and support services, can prevent burnout from escalating, curbing absenteeism and turnover while supporting employee well-being, productivity, and performance. Offering wellness programs and counseling services helps create a culture of care. Additionally, providing emotional intelligence and self-care training for academic librarians and the institutional employees can teach them to recognize and manage emotions expressed by students, faculty, and colleagues, thereby reducing emotional strain (Christian, 2015; Fic & Albro, 2022; Smith et al., 2020). Work-life balance should be actively promoted by the broader institution by setting clear boundaries, allowing flexibility in work schedules when possible, and supporting employees in utilizing their accrued leave as needed (Christian, 2015; Fancher, 2022; Ferriero & Powers,

1982; Fyn et al., 2019; Griggs-Taylor & Lee, 2022; Wood et al., 2020). This approach can reduce work-related stress, preventing burnout and turnover (Galbraith et al., 2016). It also supports a more engaged and productive workforce by promoting an organizational culture that values personal well-being alongside professional responsibilities.

Workload and inadequate staffing were the most frequently cited factors leading to work-related burnout. To address this, it is essential that academic libraries are allocated sufficient resources and staffing to ease workload pressures, thereby reducing work-related burnout. This underscores the importance of advocacy for academic library leaders (Griggs-Taylor & Lee, 2022). Advocacy was consistently highlighted as an important issue by both survey respondents and interviewees. Respondent 55 noted that work-related burnout was reduced when a library leader was “a strong advocate for library and library staff with university admin.” Respondent 57 emphasized the need for library leaders to “transparently advocate for more responsible hiring practices and salaries that keep up with the cost of living.” Respondent 383 indicated that library leadership should be “fighting for the library’s needs and advocating for its work and workers at the highest administrative level.” One interviewee (Interviewee 3) shared their personal experience with work-related burnout, expressing disappointment: “Opportunities don’t come. Advocacy is nowhere to be found, so I feel absolutely little motivation to bring something to a table where I’m not even invited.” As an effective advocate for the library, library leaders help ensure that academic libraries receive the resources, support, and recognition they need to flourish.

The issue of work overload was frequently discussed in relation to librarians (Affleck, 1996; Badia, 2017; Baird et al., 2023; Fic & Albro, 2022; Heady et al., 2020; Hogarth, 2017; Johnson & Page, 2022; Kantor, 2022; McCormack & Cotter, 2013; Oud, 2008; Shupe et al.,

2015; Smith et al., 2020; Townsend & Bugg, 2020). Academic library leadership must advocate for the necessary funding to hire sufficient staffing to meet the needs of students, faculty, and staff effectively (Jordan, 2012). The “doing more with less” attitude that often pervades academic libraries is having dire consequences, impacting services and the well-being of academic librarians (Johnson & Page, 2022; McCormack & Cotter, 2013). As Respondent 54 noted, “Library leadership is not responsible for inadequate staffing and budget. That is the fault of the university and state.” Respondent 313 expressed a similar sentiment, “Primarily, staffing shortages lead to work-related burnout. There is only so much library leadership can actually do about this without the support of higher administration and institutional budget.” In addition to funds for adequate staffing, library leadership must also advocate for a professional development budget to support continuing education. Providing opportunities for professional education that engage and challenge the intellect of academic librarians has been shown to prevent low morale, reduce work-related burnout, and minimize turnover (Affleck, 1996; Christian, 2015; Fancher, 2022; Ferriero & Powers, 1982; Fyn et al., 2019; Glusker, et al., 2022; Heady et al., 2020; Kane, 2018; Luzius & Ard, 2006; Martin, 2018; Shupe & Pung, 2011; Sorondo, 2017). Respondent 125 identified a library leadership practice leading to work-related burnout was the “failure to offer opportunities for employees to develop.” This “lack of professional development” was echoed by several other respondents to the Academic Librarian Leadership and Burnout Survey (Respondent 119, Respondent 151, Respondent 268, and Respondent 279). Interviewees similarly identified the absence of professional development opportunities as a factor contributing to work-related burnout. For example, Interviewee 7 pointed to “the lack of support for professional development interests” as a contributor to work-related burnout. At secondary institutions, library budgets are typically determined by higher administration. Therefore, library

leadership must advocate effectively to secure the necessary funds to hire a sufficient number of academic librarians and to ensure ongoing professional development opportunities for them. In the absence of adequate personnel and support, work-related burnout can become a significant issue, negatively affecting morale, well-being, productivity, and the overall quality of service provided to students. By prioritizing proper staffing and professional development opportunities, library leaders can help alleviate work-related burnout, ensuring a healthier, more effective team that better supports student learning, thereby contributing to the overall success of the institution.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study confirms that work-related burnout is a prevalent issue among academic librarians. The findings showed that approximately 70% of southeastern academic librarians surveyed were experiencing burnout at work either sometimes, often, or always. The fact that 280 respondents started the survey but were unable to complete it because they were not currently employed in one of the 13 southeastern states suggests that academic librarians across the United States are interested in participating in research on work-related burnout. Future research should aim to include academic librarians from across the country. It would also be beneficial to investigate whether work-related burnout in academic librarians is impacted by job position or by the size and type of institution (Kantor, 2022). Agyei et al. (2019) identified extreme burnout among the librarians working in electronic and reference services linking patron exposure and technostress as potential contributing factors. Subsequent research should continue measuring work-related burnout as it relates to specific positions within academic libraries. Additionally, it would be worthwhile to further explore how social factors such as race, class, and sex may impact burnout levels in academic librarians (Bynoe & Coates, 2022; Colon-Aguirre & Webb, 2020, 2022; Wood et al., 2020).

Burnout is not an isolated phenomenon limited to academic librarians alone; work-related burnout among academic library support staff should also be examined (Fic & Albro, 2022; Garczynski, et al., 2022; Johnson & Page, 2022). These staff members often encounter similar challenges, including high workloads, understaffing, and poor leadership, all of which can contribute to stress and work-related burnout. Library support staff are vital to the success of academic libraries. Examining work-related burnout among library support staff is crucial for understanding the full scope of this issue. Such research would help inform the development of effective strategies to support all library personnel, improving retention and creating a healthier work environment for everyone involved in library services.

Research also indicated that library leadership is experiencing work-related burnout (Batte & Lowe, 2022; Daniels & Jordan, 2022; Garczynski et al. 2022). Future studies should focus specifically on the experiences of library leaders with work-related burnout. This study included only academic librarians whose leadership held a MLIS or an equivalent degree. However, library leaders at the top-level often report to administrators outside the library, and work-related burnout among academic librarians whose supervisors lack an MLIS or equivalent degree warrants further investigation. Professional literature highlighted the importance of middle management and its impact on work-related burnout (Del Rio et al., 2022; Miles & Markgren, 2022). Further research should investigate the role of middle management within academic libraries. Moreover, studies focusing on transformational leadership within the academic library environment and its effect on work-related burnout would make a valuable contribution to the existing body of literature on library leadership.

During the interviews, unqualified and uncommitted colleagues were mentioned as causes of work-related burnout. A few studies on this topic exist in the current literature that

have explored how colleagues' behaviors impact academic librarians (Albro & Fic, 2022; Fic & Albro, 2022; Baird et al., 2023). However, this remains an underexplored area of burnout research that needs further investigation.

Finally, additional mixed methods studies that combine quantitative measures of work-related burnout prevalence in academic librarians with qualitative insights into its underlying causes would build upon the findings of this study. To advance this research from an initial assessment to a more practical application, future research should also examine the effectiveness of targeted burnout mitigation strategies specifically tailored for academic librarians.

Summary

Nearly half of the academic librarians in the southeastern region of the United States who participated in the survey reported experiencing moderate levels of work-related burnout. The average total work-related burnout score for the region was 47.57. According to the responses on the CBI, only 10.5% of respondents said they almost never or never felt burned out due to their work. In contrast, 89.5% indicated experiencing burnout at least occasionally, whether seldom, sometimes, often, or always, with influences from both library leadership practices and external factors beyond the control of library leadership. This work-related burnout has led many academic librarians to report feeling overwhelmed, frustrated, detached, and mentally exhausted, which has led to their self-described disengagement, avoidance, and emotional disconnection. As a result, over half of them have considered leaving their current positions. The importance of this topic was demonstrated by the numerous emails the researcher received expressing gratitude for conducting this research. One interviewee shared the following:

Dealing with these experiences and having to revisit them for this interview was painful.

But I also realized that I'm doing this because I appreciate the fact that there is now research being conducted on areas of our profession that matter a lot to me.

Age, time in current position, and turnover intention were all found to be statistically significant factors influencing work-related burnout in academic librarians. The analysis showed significant differences in the average TWRBS across age groups. Similarly, TWRBSs were significantly lower among those with less than one year of experience in their current position, compared to academic librarians with more years of experience. Lastly, academic librarians who had considered leaving their current positions due to work-related burnout reported significantly higher TWRBSs than those without turnover intentions, indicating that work-related burnout may contribute to turnover among academic librarians. However, this study found that sex and race were not significant factors in predicting work-related burnout among academic librarians in the southeastern United States.

A significant relationship was found between the TWRBS and the LPI: Observer. Both of Kouzes and Posner's leadership traits, Enable Others to Act and Model the Way, were frequently identified by survey respondents and interviewees as important leadership practices in academic libraries that may curb work-related burnout. These practices place a strong emphasis on empowerment and role modeling, which are crucial for fostering a supportive and productive work environment. Although these leadership practices were observed in relation to the LPI: Observer scores (Enable Others to Act: 7.05; Model the Way: 6.22), the moderate levels of work-related burnout reported by academic librarians, along with the LPI: Observer composite scores, only explained about 15% of the variance in TWRBSs. This suggested that other factors

also contributed to work-related burnout. This was further corroborated by the responses from both the survey respondents and the interviewees.

There are several critical considerations when exploring why academic librarians continue to experience work-related burnout despite academic library leadership behaviors being somewhat aligned with positive leadership practices. Survey respondents and interviewees also pointed out that factors beyond the control of academic library leadership, such as work overload potentially linked to short staffing due to budgeting, may have a greater impact on work-related burnout. This suggests that while Kouzes and Posner's leadership practices are important, they should not be viewed as panaceas for all issues concerning work-related burnout in academic libraries.

In conclusion, while academic librarians indicated the importance of Kouzes and Posner's leadership practices in promoting a positive work environment and potentially reducing work-related burnout and turnover, they also acknowledged that external factors, beyond the control of library leadership, can contribute to burnout in the academic library. To effectively address this issue, a more holistic approach that begins with adequately preparing academic librarians and future library leadership is needed. Library leadership must consistently model positive behaviors that set the standard for expected conduct in the academic library and engage in continuing education to remain up to date on current library practices, leadership strategies, and burnout prevention techniques. Furthermore, library leaders should also empower their academic librarians by prioritizing their emotional well-being, establishing clear expectations, promoting shared governance, offering flexibility, and providing opportunities for professional development. Addressing organizational culture is crucial, and library leadership must actively advocate for both their libraries and academic librarians at all levels of administration.

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Appendix A:
Permission Letter From Wiley

WILEY

February 6, 2024

Deborah Stanfield
Valdosta State University
222 Audubon Place
Macon, Georgia 31210

Dear Deborah Stanfield:

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If you are in agreement with the terms and conditions of this letter agreement, please sign below and return an executed copy to my attention at lpinewresearch@wiley.com.

Best wishes for every success with your research project.

Cordially,
John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
Jesus Salcedo

ACCEPTED AND AGREED:

BY: Deborah Stanfield Digitally signed by Deborah Stanfield
Date: 2024.02.06 14:12:37 -0500

Appendix B:
Copenhagen Burnout Inventory

Copenhagen Burnout Inventory

Personal Burnout

1. How often do you feel tired?^a
 2. How often are you physically exhausted?^a
 3. How often are you emotionally exhausted?^a
 4. How often do you think: "I can't take it anymore"?^a
 5. How often do you feel worn out?^a
 6. How often do you feel weak and susceptible to illness?^a
-

Work-Related Burnout

1. Is your work emotionally exhausting?^b
 2. Do you feel burned out because of your work?^b
 3. Does your work frustrate you?^b
 4. Do you feel worn out at the end of the working day?^a
 5. Are you exhausted in the morning at the thought of another day at work?^a
 6. Do you feel that every working hour is tiring for you?^a
 7. Do you have enough energy for family and friends during leisure time?^{ac}
-

Client-Related Burnout

1. Do you find it hard to work with clients?^b
 2. Does it drain your energy to work with clients?^b
 3. Do you find it frustrating to work with clients?^b
 4. Do you feel that you give more than you get back when you work with clients?^b
 5. Are you tired of working with clients?^a
 6. Do you sometimes wonder how long you will be able to continue working with clients?^a
-

Note. ^a5-point rating scale: never/almost never, seldom, sometimes, often, always, ^b5-point rating scale: to a very low degree, to a low degree, somewhat, to a high degree, to a very high degree, ^creverse scored

Appendix C:
Leadership Practices Inventory: Observer



BY JAMES M. KOUZES & BARRY Z. POSNER

INSTRUCTIONS:

You are being asked by the person whose name appears at the top of the next page to assess his or her leadership behaviors. Below the person's name you will find thirty statements describing various leadership behaviors. Please read each statement carefully, and using the rating scale on the right, ask yourself:

“How frequently does this person engage in the behavior described?”

When selecting your response to each statement:

- Be realistic about the extent to which this person actually engages in the behavior.
- Be as honest and accurate as you can be.
- DO NOT answer in terms of how you would like to see this person behave or in terms of how you think he or she should behave.
- DO answer in terms of how this person typically behaves on most days, on most projects, and with most people.
- Be thoughtful about your responses. For example, giving this person 10s on all items is most likely not an accurate description of his or her behavior. Similarly, giving someone all 1s or all 5s is most likely not an accurate description either. Most people will do some things more or less often than they do other things.
- If you feel that a statement does not apply, it's probably because you don't see or experience the behavior. That means this person does not frequently engage in the behavior, at least not around you. In that case, assign a rating of 3 or lower.

For each statement, decide on a response and then record the corresponding number in the box to the right of the statement. After you have responded to all thirty statements, go back through the LPI one more time to make sure you have responded to each statement. *Every statement must have a rating.*

The Rating Scale runs from 1 to 10. Choose the number that best applies to each statement.

RATING SCALE	1—Almost Never	3—Seldom	5—Occasionally	7—Fairly Often	9—Very Frequently
	2—Rarely	4—Once in a While	6—Sometimes	8—Usually	10—Almost Always

When you have completed the LPI-Observer, please return it to:

Thank you.

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LPI: LEADERSHIP PRACTICES INVENTORY OBSERVER

Name of Leader: _____

I (the observer) am This Leader's (Check One): Manager Direct Report Co-Worker Other

To what extent does this leader engage in the following behaviors? Choose the response number that best applies to each statement and record it in the box to the right of that statement. He or She:

1. Sets a personal example of what he/she expects of others.	<input type="text"/>
2. Talks about future trends that will influence how our work gets done.	<input type="text"/>
3. Seeks out challenging opportunities that test his/her own skills and abilities.	<input type="text"/>
4. Develops cooperative relationships among the people he/she works with.	<input type="text"/>
5. Praises people for a job well done.	<input type="text"/>
6. Makes certain that people adhere to the principles and standards that have been agreed upon.	<input type="text"/>
7. Describes a compelling image of what our future could be like.	<input type="text"/>
8. Challenges people to try out new and innovative ways to do their work.	<input type="text"/>
9. Actively listens to diverse points of view.	<input type="text"/>
10. Makes it a point to let people know about his/her confidence in their abilities.	<input type="text"/>
11. Follows through on the promises and commitments that he/she makes.	<input type="text"/>
12. Appeals to others to share an exciting dream of the future.	<input type="text"/>
13. Actively searches for innovative ways to improve what we do.	<input type="text"/>
14. Treats others with dignity and respect.	<input type="text"/>
15. Makes sure that people are creatively recognized for their contributions to the success of our projects.	<input type="text"/>
16. Asks for feedback on how his/her actions affect other people's performance.	<input type="text"/>
17. Shows others how their long-term interests can be realized by enlisting in a common vision.	<input type="text"/>
18. Asks "What can we learn?" when things don't go as expected.	<input type="text"/>
19. Involves people in the decisions that directly impact their job performance.	<input type="text"/>
20. Publicly recognizes people who exemplify commitment to shared values.	<input type="text"/>
21. Builds consensus around a common set of values for running our organization.	<input type="text"/>
22. Paints the "big picture" of what we aspire to accomplish.	<input type="text"/>
23. Identifies measurable milestones that keep projects moving forward.	<input type="text"/>
24. Gives people a great deal of freedom and choice in deciding how to do their work.	<input type="text"/>
25. Tells stories of encouragement about the good work of others.	<input type="text"/>
26. Is clear about his/her philosophy of leadership.	<input type="text"/>
27. Speaks with genuine conviction about the higher meaning and purpose of our work.	<input type="text"/>
28. Takes initiative in anticipating and responding to change.	<input type="text"/>
29. Ensures that people grow in their jobs by learning new skills and developing themselves.	<input type="text"/>
30. Gets personally involved in recognizing people and celebrating accomplishments.	<input type="text"/>

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Appendix D:
Institutional Review Board Exemption



**Institutional Review Board (IRB)
for the Protection of Human Research Participants**

PROTOCOL EXEMPTION REPORT

Protocol Number: 04516-2024

Responsible Researcher(s): Deborah Stanfield

Supervising Faculty: Dr. Kathy Nobles

Dissertation Research Member: Dr. Daesang Kim

Project Title: *An Explanatory Sequential Mixed Methods Study of Work-Related Burnout in Southeastern Academic Librarians.*

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD DETERMINATION:

This research protocol is **exempt** from Institutional Review Board (IRB) oversight under 45 CFR 46.101(b) of the federal regulations, **category 2**. If the nature of the research changes such that exemption criteria no longer apply, please consult with the IRB Administrator (irb@valdosta.edu) before continuing your research study.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

- *Exempt protocol guidelines **permit** the recording of interview sessions provided recordings are made to create an accurate transcript. Exempt guidelines **prohibit** the collection, storage, and/or sharing of recordings. Therefore, upon creation of the transcript, the recorded interview sessions must be deleted from **all recording and storage devices used.***
- *In keeping with established consent guidelines, audio/video recordings must include the researcher reading aloud the consent statement, confirming participant understanding, and establishing their willingness to take part in the interview. **The full consent statement must be read aloud to each participant at the start of each interview session.***
- *Interview transcripts must document the researcher reading the statement and obtaining verbal consent. Participants must be provided with a copy of the research statement.*
- *Pseudonym lists are to be kept in a separate, secure file from corresponding name and email lists.*
- *Upon completion of the research study all data (e.g. data, demographic info, pseudonym list, email list, transcripts, etc.) must be securely maintained (e.g. locked file cabinet, password protected computer, etc.) and accessible only by the researcher for a **minimum of 3 years**. At the end of the required time, collected data must be permanently destroyed.*

Please submit any documents you revise to the IRB Administrator at tmwright@valdosta.edu to ensure an updated record of your exemption.

Elizabeth W. Olphie

05.13.2024

Elizabeth W. Olphie, IRB Administrator

Date

Thank you for submitting an IRB application.

Please direct questions to irb@valdosta.edu or 229-259-5045.

Appendix E:
Qualtrics Survey

You are being asked to participate in a survey research project entitled "An Explanatory Sequential Mixed Methods Study of Work-Related Burnout in Academic Librarians", which is being conducted by Deborah Stanfield, a student at Valdosta State University. The purpose of the study is to measure the prevalence of work-related burnout in academic librarians in the southeastern region of the United States, to examine the relationships (if any) work-related burnout has with demographics, perceived leadership practices, and turnover intention, and to explain how leadership practices impact work-related burnout in academic librarians. You will receive no direct benefits from participating in this research study. However, your responses may help us learn more about work-related burnout in academic librarians and the impact leadership practices have on work-related burnout. There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this study other than those encountered in day-to-day life. Participation should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. This survey is anonymous. No one, including the researcher, will be able to associate your responses with your identity. Your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to take the survey, to stop responding at any time, or to skip any questions that you do not want to answer. Participants must be at least 18 years of age to participate in this study. Your completion of the survey serves as your voluntary agreement to participate in this research project and your certification that you are 18 or older. You may print a copy of this statement for your records.

Questions regarding the purpose or procedures of the research should be directed to Deborah Stanfield at dsstanfield@valdosta.edu. This study has been exempted from Institutional Review Board (IRB) review in accordance with Federal regulations. The IRB, a university committee established by Federal law, is responsible for protecting the rights and welfare of research participants. If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the IRB Administrator at 229-253-2947 or irb@valdosta.edu.

I would like to proceed with the study.

- Yes
- No

D1

Are you currently employed as an academic librarian?

- Yes
- No

D2

Please choose the state where you currently work as an academic librarian.

- Alabama
- Arkansas
- Florida
- Georgia
- Kentucky
- Louisiana
- Mississippi
- Missouri
- North Carolina
- South Carolina
- Tennessee
- Virginia
- West Virginia
- I do not work in any of the listed states.

D3

Do you hold a Master's in Library Science (MLIS) or another equivalent accredited degree?

- Yes
- No

D4

Does your current library leader hold an MLIS or another equivalent accredited degree?

- Yes
- No

D5

How many years have you worked in your current position at an academic library?

- Less than 1 year
- 1 - 5 years
- 6 - 10 years
- 11 - 19 years
- 20+ years

D6

How old are you?

- 18 - 34
- 35 - 44
- 45 - 54
- 55 - 64
- 65+
- Prefer not to say

D7

Which sex best describes you?

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say

D8

What is your race/ethnicity?

- American Indian/Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black/African American
- Hispanic
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- White
- People of all other racial/ethnic groups
- Prefer not to say

CBI 1

Please respond to the following questions:

	To a very high degree	To a high degree	Somewhat	To a low degree	To a very low degree
1. Do you feel worn out at the end of the working day?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Are you exhausted in the morning at the thought of another day at work?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. Do you feel that every working hour is tiring for you?

CBI 2

Please respond to the following questions:

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never/Almost Never
4. Do you have enough energy for family and friends during leisure time?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Is your work emotionally exhausting?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Does your work frustrate you?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Do you feel burnt out because of your work?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

LPI1

Please score the following statements found on the Leadership Practices Inventory: Observer (Copyright 2013 James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner. Published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc. All rights reserved. Used with permission).

To what extent does your library leader engage in the following behaviors? He or She:

	1-Almost Never	2-Rarely	3-Seldom	4-Once in a While	5-Occasionally	6-Sometimes	7-Fairly Often	8-Usually	9-Very Frequently	10-Almost Always
1. Sets a personal example of what he/she expects of others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Talks about future trends that will influence how our work gets done.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Seeks out	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

challenging opportunities that test his/her own skills and abilities

4. Develops cooperative relationships among the people he/she works with.

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

5. Praises people for a job well done.

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

6. Makes certain that people adhere to the principles and standards that have been agreed upon.

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

7. Describes a compelling image of what our future could be like.

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

8. Challenges people to try out new and innovative ways to do

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

their work.										
9. Actively listens to diverse points of view.	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
10. Makes it a point to let people know about his/her confidence in their abilities.	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o

LPI2

To what extent does your library leader engage in the following behaviors? He or She:

	1-Almost Never	2-Rarely	3-Seldom	4-Once in a While	5-Occasionally	6-Sometimes	7-Fairly Often	8-Usually	9-Very Frequently	10-Almost Always
11. Follows through on promises and commitments that he/she makes.	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
12. Appeals to others to share an exciting dream of the future.	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
13. Actively searches for innovative ways to improve	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o

what we do.

14. Treats people with dignity and respect.

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

15. Makes sure that people are creatively recognized for their contributions to the success of our projects.

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

16. Asks for feedback on how his/her actions affect people's performance.

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

17. Shows others how their long-term interests can be realized by enlisting in a common vision.

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

18. Asks "What can we learn?" when things don't go as expected.

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

19. Involves

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

people in the decisions that directly impact their job performance.

20. Publicly recognizes people who exemplify commitment to shared values.

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

LPI3

To what extent does your library leader engage in the following behaviors? He or She:

	1-Almost Never	2-Rarely	3-Seldom	4-Once in a While	5-Occasionally	6-Sometimes	7-Fairly Often	8-Usually	9-Very Frequently	10-Almost Always
21. Builds consensus around a common set of values for running our organization.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
22. Paints the "big picture" of what we aspire to accomplish.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
23. Identifies measurable milestones that keep projects moving forward.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
24. Gives people a great deal of freedom and choice in deciding	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

how to do their work.

25. Tells stories of encouragement about the good work of others.

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

26. Is clear about his/her philosophy of leadership.

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

27. Speaks with genuine conviction about the higher meaning and purpose of our work.

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

28. Takes initiative in anticipating and responding to change.

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

29. Ensures that people grow in their jobs by learning new skills and developing themselves.

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

30. Gets personally involved in recognizing people and celebrating accomplishments.

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

A1

Have you considered leaving your current position in an academic library due to work-related burnout?

- No
- Yes

OE1

Describe library leadership practices you feel would contribute to work-related burnout in academic libraries.

OE2

Describe library leadership practices you feel would mitigate work-related burnout in academic libraries.

V1

If asked, would you participate in a confidential, follow-up interview to discuss work-related burnout as it pertains to academic libraries?

- Yes
- No

Appendix F:

Email/Discussion Board Post Soliciting Research Participants

Subject Line: Invitation to Participate in Academic Librarian Work-Related Burnout Research
Dear fellow academic librarian,

My name is Deborah Stanfield. I am a doctoral student at Valdosta State University. I am asking for your help so that I may complete the requirements of my doctoral dissertation research in the Educational Leadership program. I am conducting a research study on academic librarians, work-related burnout, and leadership practices. The title of my research study is "An Explanatory Sequential Mixed Methods Study of Work-Related Burnout in Academic Librarians." Your responses could provide new insights into work-related burnout in the academic library and the impact leadership practices have on it. This could inform MLIS programs, administration, and professional development opportunities for current and future library leaders.

To participate in this study, you will be asked to complete an online, anonymous survey. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. No one, including the researcher, will be able to associate your responses with your identity. Your participation is voluntary, and you may choose not to participate or to withdraw at any time. You must be at least 18 years of age to participate in this study. Your completion of the study will serve as your voluntary agreement to participate in this research and your certification that you are 18 years of age or older.

The survey can be accessed [HERE](#).

Or copy and paste the URL below into your Internet browser:

https://valdosta.col.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_e3BA3OV1e5qZTTg

Thank you,

Deborah Shepherd Stanfield

Questions regarding the purpose or procedures of the research should be directed to Deborah Stanfield at dsstanfield@valdosta.edu. This study has been approved by the Valdosta State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Research Participants. The IRB, a university committee established by Federal law, is responsible for protecting the rights and welfare of research participants. If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the IRB Administrator at 229-253-2947 or irb@valdosta.edu.

Appendix G:
Introduction Page of the Online Survey

You are being asked to participate in a survey research project, “An Explanatory Sequential Mixed Methods Study of Work-Related Burnout in Academic Librarians,” which is being conducted by Deborah Shepherd Stanfield, a doctoral student at Valdosta State University. The multifaceted purpose of this study is to measure the prevalence of work-related burnout in academic librarians in the southeastern region of the United States; examine its relationships with demographics, perceived leadership practices, and turnover intentions; and explain how leadership practices impact work-related burnout in the academic library.

You will receive no direct benefits from participating in this research study. However, your responses may help us learn more about work-related burnout in academic librarians and the impact leadership practices have on it. There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this study other than those encountered in day-to-day life.

Participation should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. This survey is anonymous. No one, including the researcher, will be able to associate your responses with your identity. Your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to take the survey, to stop responding at any time, or to skip any questions that you do not want to answer. Participants must be at least 18 years of age to participate in this study. Your completion of the survey serves as your voluntary agreement to participate in this research project and your certification that you are 18 or older. You may print a copy of this statement for your records.

Questions regarding the purpose or procedures of the research should be directed to Deborah Stanfield at dsstanfield@valdosta.edu. This study has been approved by the Valdosta State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Research Participants. The IRB, a university committee established by Federal law, is responsible for protecting the rights and welfare of research participants. If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the IRB Administrator at 229-253-2947 or irb@valdosta.edu.

I would like to proceed with the study.

Yes

No

Appendix H:
Email Script for Scheduling Interviews

Dear Fellow Academic Librarian,

You are being asked to participate in an interview as part of a research study entitled “An Explanatory Sequential Mixed Methods Study of Work-Related Burnout in Academic Librarians”, which is being conducted by Deborah Stanfield, a student at Valdosta State University. The purpose of the study is to measure the prevalence of work-related burnout in academic librarians in the southeastern region of the United States, to examine the relationships (if any) work-related burnout has with demographics, perceived leadership practices, and turnover intention, and to explain how leadership practices impact work-related burnout in academic librarians. You will receive no direct benefits from participating in this research study. However, your responses may help us learn more about work-related burnout in academic librarians and the impact leadership practices have on work-related burnout. There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this study other than those encountered in day-to-day life. Participation should take approximately 30 minutes to complete. The interview will be audio recorded to capture your concerns, opinions, and ideas. Once the interview recording has been transcribed, the recording will be deleted from recording devices. This research study and your participation will be kept confidential. Your identifiable information will be replaced with a pseudonym in publications or presentations. No one, including the researcher, will associate your responses with your identity. Your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to participate, to stop responding, or to skip questions you do not want to answer. You must be at least 18 years of age to participate in this study. Your participation in the interview serves as your voluntary agreement to participate in this research project and your certification that you are 18 years of age or older.

If you have experienced work-related burnout in your current position as an academic librarian, I would like to schedule your interview and am happy to accommodate your schedule. Please let me know your preferred day and time (30-minute interview slots available: September 9 from 10:00 until 3:00, September 16 from 10:00 until 3:00, September 18 from 10:00 until 3:00, September 23 from 10:00 until 3:00, September 25 from 10:00 until 3:00). The interview should last less than 30 minutes. We will meet in Microsoft Teams.

I look forward to speaking with you.

Best,

Deborah Shepherd Stanfield

dsstanfield@valdosta.edu

478-361-8811

Questions regarding the purpose or procedures of the research should be directed to Deborah Stanfield at dsstanfield@valdosta.edu. This study has been approved by the Valdosta State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Research Participants. The IRB, a university committee established by Federal law, is responsible for protecting the rights and welfare of research participants. If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the IRB Administrator at 229-253-2947 or irb@valdosta.edu.

Appendix I:
Interview Questions and Protocol

Introduction:

Hi _____ . I am Deborah and it is so nice to meet you. Thank you again for agreeing to be interviewed. I will be asking you some questions regarding your experiences with work-related burnout in your current academic librarian position.

It is my hope that this information will help me better understand work-related burnout in the academic library and how library leadership practices impact it. All the information that you share with me today will be kept confidential, and neither your name nor your school's name will be used within the study. At any time during the interview if you need a break, please let me know.

This session will be recorded so that I can transcribe your information for future analysis. These recordings and transcripts will be kept in Microsoft OneDrive, which is password protected. Once the recordings are transcribed, I will delete them. After 5 years, I will delete the transcripts.

Do you have any questions about the interview before we begin? It is your choice as to whether you would like to have your computer camera turned on or off during the interview. Please make that choice now before I begin the recording.

Interview Questions:

1. In what state do you currently work?
2. What is your current position?
3. How many years have you been working in your current position?
4. Can you describe any experiences of work-related burnout that you have had in your current position? How did these experiences make you feel?
5. How have library leadership practices impacted your experiences with work-related burnout? Can you provide me with an example of that?
6. Would you ever consider leaving your current position due to work-related burnout? Why or why not?
7. Is there anything else that you would like to share about your experience with work-related burnout in the academic library?

Closing:

Thank you for participating in this interview and my study. Please be reassured that all your responses will remain confidential, and your name will not be used in this study. If you are interested in receiving a copy of the final study, please provide me with an email address.

Appendix J:
Final Codes for Open-Ended Questions

Open Ended Question 1

Model the Way	Lack of Communication Lack of Shared Values Negative Leadership Attitudes Negative Leadership Behaviors Unqualified Leadership
Inspire a Shared Vision	Lack of Communication Lack of Vision Unclear Goals
Challenge the Process	Lack of Communication Poor Change Management Prohibits Followers from Taking Risks Status Quo
Enable Others to Act	Inflexibility Lack of Autonomy Lack of Collaboration Lack of Communication Lack of Follower Support Lack of Professional Development Lack of Shared Governance Lack of Supervision Lack of Transparency Lack of Trust in Followers Micromanagement Role Ambiguity Unclear Expectations Unrealistic Expectations
Encourage the Heart	Lack of Advocacy Lack of Communication Lack of Providing Feedback Lack of Recognition Lack of Work-Life Balance Support Negative Workplace Culture
Other	Lack of Advancement Opportunities Lack of Resources No Support from Institutional Administration Poor Compensation Poor Physical Environment Repetitiveness of Job Short Staffed Tenure Work Overload

Open Ended Question 2

Model the Way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good Communication Positive Leadership Attitudes Positive Leadership Behaviors Qualified Leadership Receives Feedback Resolves Conflict Shared Values
Inspire a Shared Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear Expectations Clear Goals Good Communication Shared Vision
Challenge the Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenges Status Quo Good Change Management Good Communication
Enable Others to Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Autonomy Collaboration Flexibility Follower Support Good Communication Good Project Management Mentoring No Micromanagement Professional Development Opportunities Proper Supervision Realistic Expectations Role Clarity Shared Governance Transparency Trust in Followers
Encourage the Heart	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocacy Good Communication Improves Workplace Culture Personal Connection with Followers Provides Feedback Recognition Work-Life Balance Support
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advancement Opportunities Appropriate Staffing Proper Compensation Proper Physical Environment Proper Resources Proper Workloads Support from Institutional Administration Tenure Variety of Tasks

Appendix K:
Leadership Attitudes and Behaviors

	Leadership Attitudes	Leadership Behaviors	
Question 1: Describe library leadership practices you feel would contribute to work-related burnout in academic libraries.	Academic Snobbery	Absent	Poor Role Model
	Angry	Belittling	Sabotage
	Anxious	Bullying	Selfishness
	Apathy	Competitive	Undependable
	Complacency	Condescending	Undermining
	Cynicism	Conflict Avoidance	Unfair
	Defensive	Critical	Unpredictable
	Dejected	Demanding	Unprofessional
	Disappointed	Detached	Unreachable
	Discontent	Disassociated	Verbally Abusive
	Disingenuous	Disconnected	Volatile
	Disinterested	Dishonest	
	Dismissive	Disorganized	
	Disrespectful	Disrespectful	
	Indifferent	Divisive	
	Infallibility	Favoritism	
	Narcissistic	Gaslighting	
	Negativity	Hands-Off	
	People Pleaser	Imposter Syndrome	
	Pessimistic	Inconsistency	
	Rude	Indecisiveness	
	Stressed	Irresponsible	
	Superiority	Lazy	
	Toxic Positivity	Manipulating	
	Unappreciative	Neglectful	
	Uncaring	No Follow Through	
	Unempathetic	Nonethical	
	Unforgiving	Over Delegating	
	Vocational Awe	Passive Aggressive	
		Paternalistic	

	Leadership Attitudes	Leadership Behaviors
Question 2: Describe library leadership practices you feel would mitigate work-related burnout in academic libraries.	Approachable Caring Compassionate Emotionally Intelligent Empathy Openness	Accountable Available Committed Dedicated Engaged Follow-through Good Role Model Honest Inclusive Interactive Invested Involved Kind Organized Present Professional Respectful Trustworthy