

New Library World

Concepts, reality and suggestions about Greek library management education

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Keywords

Libraries, Library management, Librarians, Education, Greece, Surveys

Abstract

The rapid changes in the Greek Library scene in the last decade and the need for librarians to work in a more complex and demanding environment create responsibilities for library schools to design and implement new programmes, adopting a new learning theory. A literature review indicated constructivism as a theory that could be used to create a new educational environment that will allow student-centered and collaborative learning, and facilitate interaction. In order to identify the competencies and skills required of library managers as perceived by practitioners, the authors conducted a survey. The population of the survey was the staff of Greek libraries, the data collection method was a census and the instrument was a structured questionnaire. Descriptive statistics, as well as ANOVA one-way, Pearson's parametric correlation and multiple regression were run to determine the present and needed managerial competencies and skills of Greek librarians.

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Introduction

The library picture in Greece has changed radically in the last decade. Professional librarians were appointed in library positions after a long tradition of hiring untrained and unqualified personnel, based on the notion that any new college or even high school graduate can perform library tasks. Many libraries have new organisational charts and administrative patterns have started to change. In larger institutions, functional units and job specialisations have emerged. Funding of libraries has undergone positive change: more state funds are made available and European Union funds have flowed in. Information technology has become a part of library housekeeping and plays an important and dominant role in the dissemination of information. Users, introduced to the wealth of electronic sources, have become more demanding (Moreleli-Cacouris and Tsafou, 2002).

It is obvious that different techniques, competencies and skills are required for the management of these new complex organisations. At the same time, however, feed in from practitioners has indicated a lack of competent and well-trained library managers. Library education has been criticized for not adapting to or foreseeing these evolutionary trends. It is also true that the setting of library education in Greece has not kept pace with these dramatic changes. One must note that library training started being provided at a higher educational level for the first time in the late 1970s, in an effort to prepare professional librarians and to cover the new demands of the Greek library market of that decade. To date, library education is still provided only at the undergraduate level in the three departments in Athens, Thessaloniki and Corfu. All three curricula include various modules tackling library management issues, but there is only one course, in each school, dealing entirely with administration and management of libraries.

A literature review does not reveal any research concerning the development of library master's programmes in Greece in general, and any concern about library management education, in particular. Continuing education programmes have been organised and offered, rather sporadically, covering mainly material organisation aspects, whereas in other countries, and especially in

Europe, the development of post-graduate library management programmes, as well as continuing education programmes, have had a long tradition. It is obvious, therefore, that effort should be made to improve library management education in Greece.

Taking into consideration the perceived gaps in library education, the changed Greek library environment with its new demands for competencies and skills, as well as the trend in the Greek academic community for the development of new post-graduate programmes, the authors decided to search for a theoretical framework for the development of new programmes or courses. It is a challenge for the authors to accept a new pedagogical theory and suggest a methodology or a procedure for the organisation of quality assured programmes.

A theoretical framework for library education

For many years the authors have advocated that the present system of academic programme and curricular development is not satisfactory, especially the emphasis on student testing, based on the repetition of information presented by teachers in class, as this does not cultivate autonomous, critical thinking. It is felt that it is necessary to develop a different educational environment, adopting a new theory that will help students think independently and more effectively.

Theory will assist in understanding how and what students are learning and how the acquisition of knowledge can be better enhanced. A literature review indicated constructivism as a learning theory that could be used to develop high quality educational programmes:

Constructivism is an epistemology, a theory of knowledge used to explain how we know, what we know (Lorsbach and Tobin, 2002).

We must accept the proposition that knowledge is not acquired in a void, that we learn by constructing our own understanding of the world and that teachers cannot transfer knowledge directly to their students' minds. According to constructivists:

[...] learning is defined as the individual's ability to construct meaning by extracting and organising information from a given environment (Seel, 2001).

Savery and Duffy (1995) discuss the philosophical base of constructivism in terms of three propositions:

- P1. Understanding is in our interactions with the environment. What we understand is a function of the content, the context, the activity of the learner and, perhaps most importantly, the goals of the learner.
- P2. The learner's puzzlement and quest for knowledge is a stimulus for learning and determines the organisation and nature of what is learnt.
- P3. Knowledge evolves through social negotiation and through the evaluation of the viability of individual understanding.

Teachers, on the other hand, should acknowledge the function of prior learning in the process of learning new concepts. They should recognize that learners come from varied backgrounds with varied experiences, skills, interests, learning needs and different cultures. Students should be considered as thinkers with emerging theories about the world. For educators to perform in this ever more complex environment, the traditional approach of teaching, presenting the same information in the same way to all, is ineffective, as it does not provide any space for learners to construct their own individual knowledge. For these reasons it is the authors' belief that a model should be followed that would allow student-centered and collaborative learning and that would facilitate interaction.

Focal points to consider when designing library management courses

Thus, a procedure is suggested during which the following focal points will be examined, in an effort to develop the appropriate programmes and provide librarians with the necessary knowledge of library management:

- learners for whom the programmes will be developed and their characteristics;
- methodology for curriculum development;
- the general objectives of the programmes;
- the content of the programmes;
- instruction methods to be used for the delivery of the courses;

- a mechanism which will guarantee the effectiveness of the course; and
- learning resources to be used.

In order to identify the competencies and skills required of library managers as perceived by practitioners, the authors have conducted a survey. The survey aimed also at identifying any potential learners, their characteristics and their specific needs for educational programmes.

The survey

The population of the survey was the staff of the academic, special and state public libraries of Greece. The population unit was each single person working in a library. As the population size amounts to less than 1,000 individuals it was decided to use a census as the data collection method. The instrument of the census was a structured questionnaire, which was sent by e-mail or fax. This proved to be a time-consuming effort, since no authoritative directory of Greek libraries exists, let alone listing e-mail addresses or fax numbers. Although confidentiality of participants' identity was unquestionable, comparison of returned with sent messages was made, to identify return rate of responses, and enable the research assistant to send a second message to those not having answered. The data collection provided 213 usable questionnaires. According to Tull and Hawkins (1993, p. 314) the sample of the research can be considered adequate in terms of size, as it represents more than 20 per cent of the total population. However, it cannot be tested in terms of distribution by type of library given the absence of reliable relevant data.

Questionnaire content

The questionnaire included ten questions, in sum 73 variables. A total of six of the questions aimed at investigating the following situational characteristics of the respondents and the environment in which they work:

- (1) type of library;
- (2) number of employees;
- (3) number of users;
- (4) years of work experience;
- (5) educational level; and
- (6) position of the respondents in the library.

The seventh question aimed at identifying the degree of each respondent's involvement in a series of tasks performed in the library. This variable, named "Jobs", was designed as a multi-item "measure" consisting of 21 items, measured on a four-point frequency scale, from 1 = not at all to 4 = very much. In the eighth question, named "Skills", the respondents were asked to record the degree to which they perceived to possess certain skills, indicating, in addition, whether they acquired each from their academic training or from experience. Thus, this question was examined in two separate variables named "Education skills" and "Experience skills", respectively. They were both multi-item, consisting of 13 items, measured on an evaluation scale from 1 = insufficient to 4 = excellent. The ninth question was devoted to the investigation of the respondents' personal judgment concerning the importance of a number of qualifications necessary to determine the ideal profile of a library manager. This variable, named "Profile", included 19 items measured on an importance scale from 1 = unimportant to 4 = very important. Items included in all variables are based on functions, competencies and skills discussed in the literature and on objectives listed in the Greek Departments of Library Studies syllabi. In the last tenth variable the respondents were asked to choose one out of five possible ways, through which they believed they would improve their own characteristics and skills in order to acquire the profile of an ideal library manager.

The internal consistency of the multi-item "measures" was estimated through Cronbach's alpha. It resulted in a value of 0.8934 for the variable "Jobs", in 0.9432 for "Education skills", in 0.9305 for "Experience skills" and in 0.8638 for "Profile". All reliability estimates are characterized as excellent, according to Robinson *et al.* (1991).

Results

Descriptive statistics, as well as ANOVA one-way, Pearson's parametric correlation and multiple regression, were run to determine the background of library employees, their perceptions of their competencies and skills, the way they believe to have acquired them, their perception of an

ideal manager and the way they think it better suits them to improve their knowledge in management issues.

From the descriptive statistics (see Tables I-VI) it is noted that the great majority of the sample (79.3 per cent) work in academic libraries, central or departmental. This was expected, as the number of people working in academic libraries far exceeds that of state

Table I Library

	Frequency	Per cent
Academic central	93	45.8
Academic department	68	33.5
Special library	30	14.8
State library	12	5.9

Table II Personnel

	Frequency	Per cent
1-3 employees	69	34.0
4-10 employees	78	38.4
More than 10	55	27.1

Table III Users

	Frequency	Per cent
Up to 5,000	111	54.7
5,001-10,000	54	26.6
More than 10,000	37	18.2
Missing	1	0.5

Table IV Years

	Frequency	Per cent
Less than 5	84	41.4
6-15	99	48.8
More than 16	18	8.9
Missing	2	1.0

Table V Education

	Frequency	Per cent
High school	5	2.5
Library studies AEI	12	5.9
Library studies TEI	134	66.0
Other University degree	25	12.3
Postgraduate library studies	21	10.3
Other postgraduate studies	6	3.0

Table VI Position

	Frequency	Per cent
Manager	33	16.3
Staff	162	79.8
Missing	8	3.9

library employees. It seems that there is an almost equal number (around 30 per cent) of libraries which employ either one to three, or four to ten, or more than ten employees. The majority (54.7 per cent) of the libraries examined, serve up to 5,000 users. There is only a small percentage (8.9 per cent) of the respondents who have been working in libraries for more than 15 years. A rather great majority (66.0 per cent) of the sample possesses a library studies degree from TEI, while there is a 10.3 per cent that has a master's degree in library and information science. As expected, 79.8 per cent of the respondents are line library staff members, and only 16.3 per cent have managerial positions.

The variable "Jobs" takes theoretical values from 21-84. Providing a mean of 48.67 (Std D = 12.5506), it indicates that the sample reported an above-average involvement in the set of jobs (see Table VII). In the frequencies of the separate items, it is observed that the respondents are mostly involved in organising and circulating materials as well as in providing reference services. Most of the respondents state that they are almost not at all involved in allocating budget resources and in recommending hires and terminations. Respondents state that they are to a lesser extent involved in designing work standards and evaluating performance, in planning staff training, in establishing marketing plans and in preparing proposals for grants, etc. They also reported that they are moderately involved in defining services to be provided, in planning space, in cooperating with administration, in collection development, in developing library policies, and in managing computer systems.

The variable "Education skills" takes theoretical values from 13-52. With a mean of 23.96 (Std D = 8.7427), it indicates a moderate grade of perceived possession of the set of skills acquired from academic training (see Table VII). Taking into consideration that only 56 respondents (response rate 26 per cent) answered any of the items, it is assumed that the actual level of perceived possession of skills through academic training is rather low. From the few that managed to answer this question, it is reported that they obtained from their academic training the following skills at a slightly above moderate degree in declining order: analysing and synthesising, developing strategic plans,

Table VII Descriptive statistics

	<i>n</i>	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std D
Library	203	1.00	4.00	1.8079	0.8997
Personnel	203	1.00	3.00	1.9360	0.7840
Users	202	1.00	3.00	1.6337	0.7755
Years	201	1.00	3.00	1.6716	0.6338
Education	203	1.00	6.00	3.3103	0.9320
Position	195	1.00	2.00	1.8308	0.3759
Develops collection	187	1.00	4.00	2.6043	1.1702
Organizes material	197	1.00	4.00	3.0964	1.0907
Prepares material for use	193	1.00	4.00	2.8601	1.1255
Circulates material	197	1.00	4.00	3.0254	1.0900
Provides reference services	192	1.00	4.00	3.3490	0.8910
Manages computer systems	187	1.00	4.00	2.5455	1.0685
Provides bibliographic instruction	186	1.00	4.00	2.1720	1.1114
Cooperates with administration	186	1.00	4.00	2.6237	1.0896
Cooperates with other institutions	190	1.00	4.00	2.4737	0.9903
Develops library policies	189	1.00	4.00	2.5661	1.0729
Develops strategic plan	186	1.00	4.00	2.2419	1.1055
Defines services to be provided	190	1.00	4.00	2.7684	1.0735
Allocates budget resources	191	1.00	4.00	1.9581	1.1645
Plans space	190	1.00	4.00	2.6316	1.0988
Organizes work in departments	188	1.00	4.00	2.4415	1.1754
Supervises staff	188	1.00	4.00	2.0319	1.2100
Recommends hires and terminations	189	1.00	4.00	1.6296	1.0002
Designs work standards and evaluates performance	188	1.00	4.00	1.5638	0.9597
Plans training for staff	187	1.00	4.00	1.5722	0.9210
Establishes marketing plan	185	1.00	4.00	1.5514	0.8135
Prepares proposals	186	1.00	4.00	1.5484	0.9588
Analyzing and synthesizing	100	1.00	4.00	2.5200	0.9372
Developing strategic plans	105	1.00	4.00	2.3333	0.8951
Managing people	105	1.00	4.00	1.8952	0.8979
Taking decisions	89	1.00	4.00	2.2247	0.9505
Developing control techniques	84	1.00	4.00	1.8452	0.8430
Allocating responsibilities	91	1.00	4.00	2.0989	1.0117
Stimulating staff	89	1.00	4.00	1.9213	1.0026
Managing budgets	91	1.00	4.00	1.7363	0.9409
Developing communications with other institutions	92	1.00	4.00	2.3043	1.0868
Developing interpersonal skills	76	1.00	4.00	2.1447	0.9195
Providing leadership	77	1.00	4.00	1.8052	0.9464
Developing team work	87	1.00	4.00	2.3333	0.9483
Developing negotiation techniques	77	1.00	4.00	1.7662	0.9854
Analyzing and synthesizing	169	1.00	4.00	2.9763	0.6722
Developing strategic plans	152	1.00	4.00	2.7763	0.7387
Managing people	144	1.00	4.00	2.4028	0.9703
Taking decisions	163	1.00	4.00	2.9755	0.6662
Developing control techniques	141	1.00	4.00	2.3404	0.9010
Allocating responsibilities	155	1.00	4.00	2.7161	0.8735
Stimulating staff	147	1.00	4.00	2.4558	0.9380
Managing budgets	158	1.00	4.00	2.3671	0.9667
Developing communications with other institutions	162	1.00	4.00	2.8951	0.8236
Developing interpersonal skills	166	1.00	4.00	3.0361	0.7458
Providing leadership	163	1.00	4.00	2.4908	0.8983
Developing team work	164	1.00	4.00	2.9634	0.7824

(continued)

Table VII

	<i>n</i>	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std D
Developing negotiation techniques	162	1.00	4.00	2.5679	0.8767
Library degree	201	2.00	4.00	3.6517	0.6149
Knowledge of technology	200	2.00	4.00	3.7600	0.4620
Creativity	200	2.00	4.00	3.8000	0.4483
Strategic planning	200	2.00	4.00	3.8200	0.4104
Budget planning	200	2.00	5.00	3.7150	0.4847
Sense of responsibility	199	2.00	4.00	3.9296	0.2754
Technocratic attitude	186	1.00	4.00	2.9516	0.8206
Selection of fellow workers	197	1.00	4.00	3.7513	0.5092
Management of time	191	1.00	4.00	3.6126	0.6041
Allocation of responsibilities	198	2.00	4.00	3.7828	0.4372
Decision making	199	2.00	4.00	3.8894	0.3450
Interpersonal communication	196	2.00	4.00	3.7755	0.4536
Analytical and synthetic skills	186	2.00	4.00	3.6344	0.5359
Motivation	187	2.00	4.00	3.6684	0.5653
Qualities of a leader	200	2.00	4.00	3.5700	0.5889
Management of staff	197	2.00	4.00	3.7157	0.5253
Team-based work	195	2.00	4.00	3.7641	0.4492
Flexibility, adaptability	199	1.00	4.00	3.7186	0.5607
Control techniques	190	1.00	4.00	3.3684	0.7135
Ideal Manager	197	1.00	5.00	2.9848	0.9609
"Jobs"	152	25.00	80.00	48.6776	12.5506
"Education skills"	56	13.00	46.00	23.9643	8.7427
"Experience skills"	96	17.00	52.00	34.6354	8.3831
"Profile"	164	52.00	76.00	70.0061	5.3555
Valid <i>n</i> (listwise)	31				

developing team work and developing communications with other institutions. On the contrary, it is underlined that the least obtained skills from their academic training are in increasing order: managing budgets, developing negotiation techniques, followed by providing leadership, developing control techniques and managing people.

The variable "Experience skills" takes also theoretical values from 13-52. It provided a better mean of 34.63 (Std D = 8.3831), which indicates a good grade of perceived possession of managerial skills acquired from experience. It must be noted again that more than half of the sample did not manage to answer the relevant question (see Table VII). However, the response rate (45 per cent) is better than the one concerning managerial skills acquired from academic training. The respondents seem to believe that they possess, from their experience, a good degree of the following skills in declining order: developing interpersonal skills, analysing and synthesising, making decisions, developing team work, developing communications with other institutions, while they reported a rather

moderate degree of skills in managing budgets and in developing control techniques.

The variable "Profile" takes theoretical values from 19-76. The observed mean of 70.00 (Std D = 5.3555) indicates the great importance of the set of qualifications that formulate the ideal profile of a manager according to the respondents' beliefs (see Table VII). The respondents reported that the most important qualifications for a manager are the sense of responsibility, decision making, strategic planning and creativity. Next in declining order are, allocation of responsibilities, interpersonal communication, team-based work, knowledge of technology, selection of fellow workers.

The majority of the sample prefers continuing education and masters degree programmes (56.7 per cent and 21.2 per cent, respectively) when answering the last question about the ways that might better improve their personal characteristics and skills in order to obtain the profile of an ideal manager (see Table VIII). There is also a small percentage (15.3 per cent) who believe

Table VIII Ideal manager

	Frequency	Per cent
Graduate library studies	8	3.9
Postgraduate library studies	43	21.2
Continuing education	115	56.7
Reading	6	3.0
Experience	25	12.3
Missing	6	3.0

that reading or experience are better ways for becoming ideal managers.

By splitting the sample, we observe that those who prefer a postgraduate library degree in order to obtain the ideal manager profile, provided somewhat lower means in the variables "Education skills" (mean 20.64) and "Experience skills" (mean 31.74) than their counterparts who chose continuous education programmes (means 25.48 and 35.38, respectively), as the most appropriate way to obtain the skills of the ideal manager. It seems that the former group believes that they have acquired less managerial skills either from education or experience, than the latter, i.e. those who indicate a preference for continuing education programmes. It is also interesting to note that respondents who indicate a master's degree as the best way of improving their competencies and skills in management are the ones who also consider a library degree to be one of the prerequisites for the ideal manager. On the contrary, respondents who chose the continuing education programmes as a means to improve their managerial competencies seem to consider the library degree less important for the profile of the ideal manager (means 3.84 and 3.66, respectively).

In bivariate analysis, ANOVA One-way was employed to explore differences in the continuous variables described, i.e. across each one of the situational characteristics, that is type of library they work, years of employment, etc. A statistically significant relationship ($p = 0.102$) was found between the variables "Jobs" and Library as well as between "Experience skills" and Library ($p = 0.078$), indicating that respondents who work in a state library are more involved in the set of jobs (Figure 1), and have acquired their managerial skills from experience to a greater degree than their counterparts (Figure 2).

A statistically significant relationship ($p = 0.054$) was also found between the variables "Experience skills" and Users indicating that the respondents who work in

libraries serving more than 10,000 users, acquired their managerial skills more from experience (Figure 3). A statistically significant relationship was also found between the variables "Education skills" and Education ($p = 0.007$), indicating that respondents who hold a postgraduate library degree believe to have acquired skills from their education more than the other respondents. This can be an indication that on the master's level management issues were better addressed (Figure 4).

Statistically significant relationships ($p = 0.000$) were found in the variables "Jobs" and "Experience skills" across Position. Respondents having a managerial position are more involved in the set of jobs; this is natural, since management is their main responsibility (Figure 5). It is interesting to note that they seem to believe they have obtained their skills mostly from their experience (Figure 6). A statistically significant relationship ($p = 0.066$) was found in the variable "Experience skills" across Ideal manager, indicating that the respondents who feel they need a graduate library studies degree are the ones who believe they have obtained their skills from experience (Figure 7).

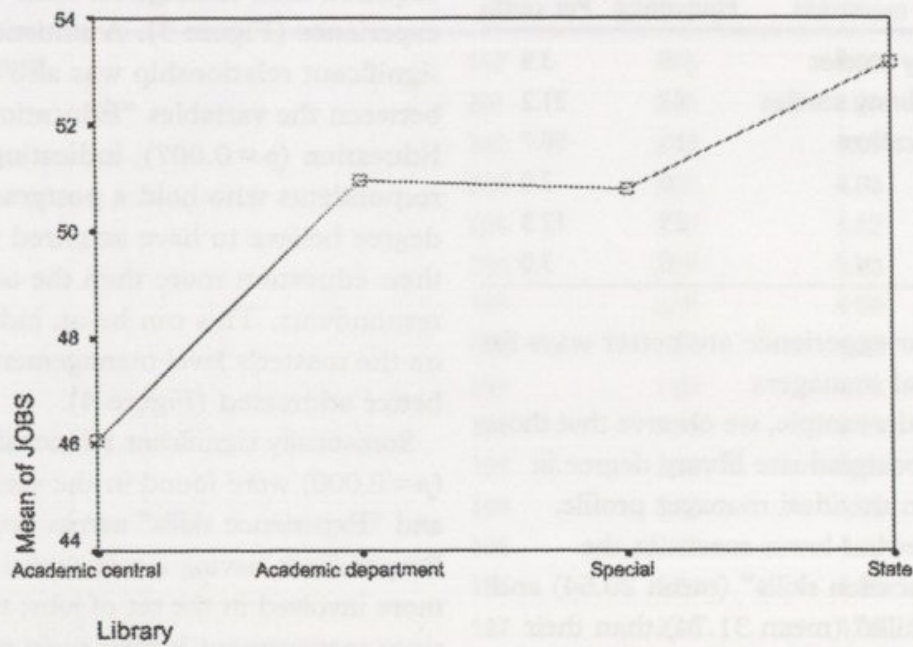
Pearson's parametric correlation indicates that statistically significant positive relationships at the 0.01 level (two-tailed) exist between the variable "Jobs" and each one of the variables "Experience skills" ($r = 0.651$) and "Profile" ($r = 0.237$). These findings indicate that the respondents who scored higher in the set of jobs are those who believe more that they obtained the skills through experience. The ones involved in the greater array of jobs also pay more importance to the qualifications needed for an ideal manager (see Table IX).

In multi-variate analysis, multiple regression was employed to examine the interactive effect of a selected set of continuous variables (i.e. Personnel, Users, Years of employment, Education, "Jobs", "Education skills" and "Profile"), taken as independent, to the variable "Experience skills", taken as dependent. The Adj R^2 found was 0.645 and the resulting equation (see Table X) is:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Experience skills} = & 4.633 + 0.391 \text{ Years} \\ & + 0.370 \text{ Jobs} \\ & + 0.348 \text{ Education skills} \end{aligned}$$

The findings indicate that 64.5 per cent of the respondents perceived a degree concerning

Figure 1 Differences in Jobs across Library



their skills obtained by their experience, is explained by the interactive effect of the years of employment, the degree of their involvement in the set of jobs and the perceived degree of skills obtained by their education.

Characteristics of potential learners

It was the authors' perception, and it was verified by the survey, that both a masters' degree programme and continuing education programmes should be designed for Greek librarians. A large percentage of the respondents require continuing education programmes: short, specific courses, enabling

them to perform better in everyday practice. On the other hand, a master's programme has different objectives, is based on theory and will enable learners to handle the library management issues in a more scientific way. It should be taken into consideration that all respondents preferring either continuing education or master's programmes are potential learners. For this reason, more attention should be paid to their characteristics, their involvement in the set of jobs and their perceptions for the ideal manager. The way they have acquired certain skills and competencies, as well as their priorities for the profile of an ideal manager, will help to formulate the content of the

Figure 2 Differences in Experience skills across Library

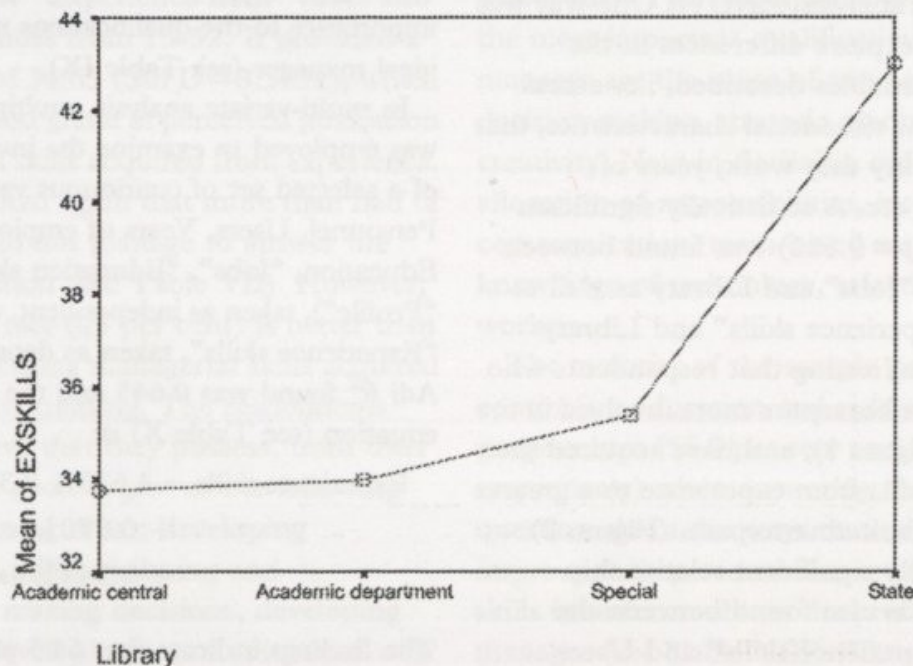
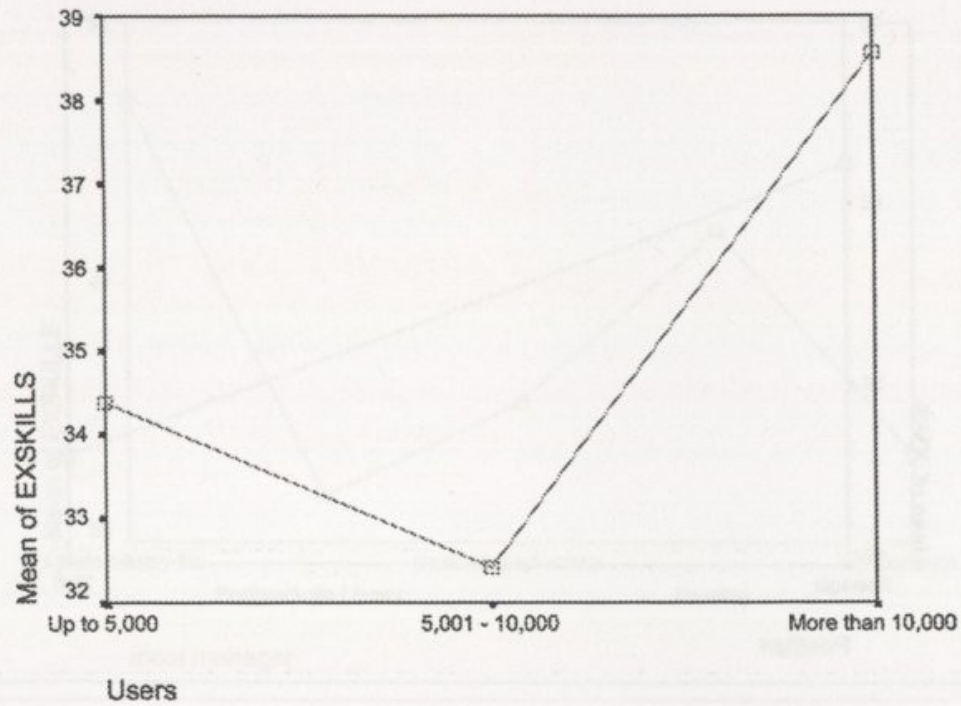


Figure 3 Differences in Experience skills across Users



programmes. Attention should also be paid to the tasks they perform in libraries, if authentic tasks have to be identified and used, and around which theory will be developed.

Mapping the respondents' involvement in the set of jobs has indicated a more active approach in library functions, operations and services. Their involvement mainly in organising and circulating materials and in providing reference services might be attributed to two reasons:

- (1) The existing library education programme puts much emphasis on these themes, offering four courses of cataloguing, two courses of classification, two courses of subject indexing and six courses for reference services.

It should be noted that the majority of the respondents hold a library studies degree and through their education they became more competent and feel more confident in dealing with these aspects of library work.

Figure 4 Differences in Education skills across Education

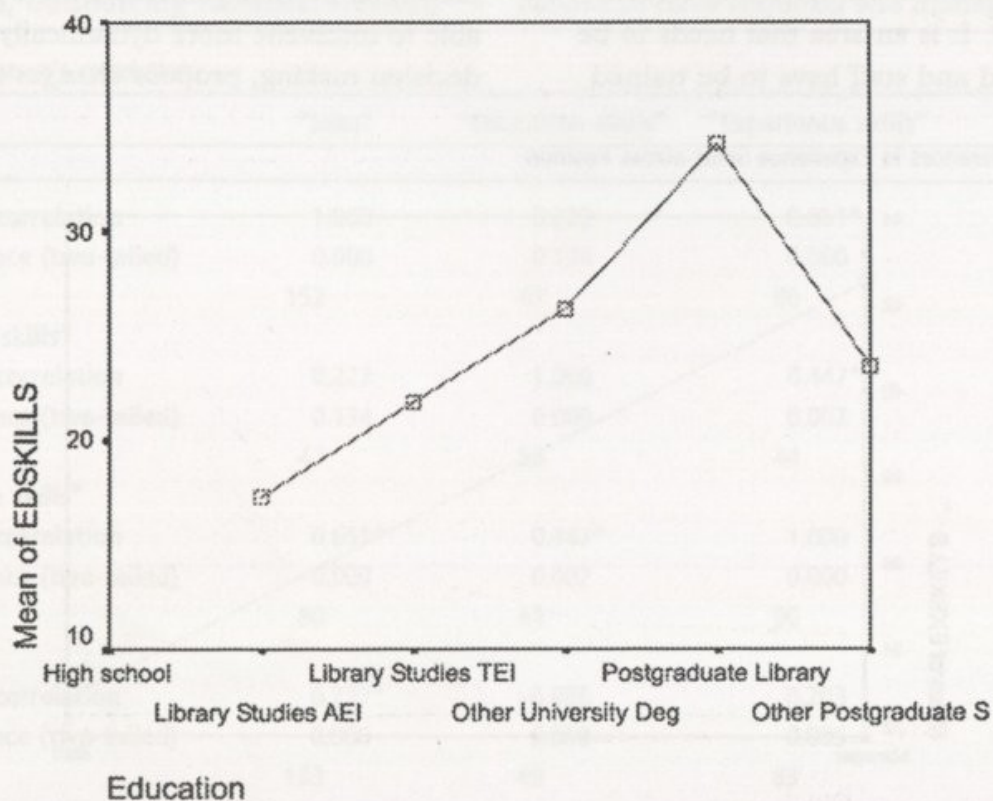
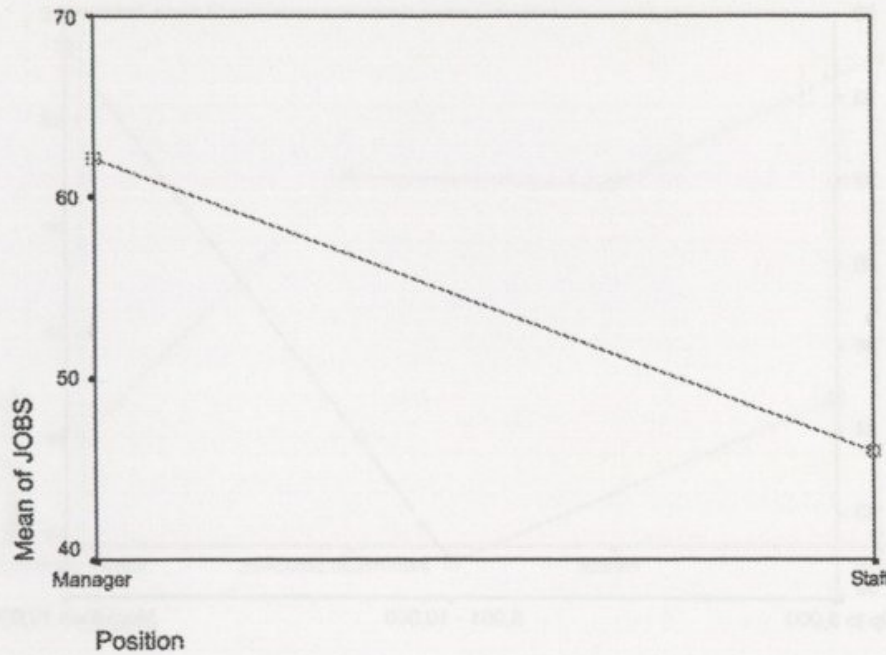


Figure 5 Differences in Jobs across Position



(2) Various studies had indicated the lack of bibliographic control in Greek libraries (Moreleli-Cacouris *et al.*, 1990; Moreleli-Cacouris and Skepastianu, 1991; Zahos and Papaioannu, 1991). Also since 1996, academic libraries in particular allocated considerable funds for new acquisitions. Backlogs and new materials needed to be organised. Thus, involvement of library staff in material organisation can be easily explained.

However, although reference services are another area of high involvement, bibliographic instruction is very seldom mentioned. It is an area that needs to be emphasized and staff have to be trained

accordingly. On the other hand, the lack of involvement in fiscal and human resources management, could be due to the fact that most libraries, until very recently, were not independent entities, but part of the general administrative structure of their parent organisations. Academic libraries were also fragmented, belonging to individual academic faculties and chairs and usually did not have an annual budget and were not directly involved in personnel management. This, coupled with gaps in library education, resulted in poor management. The researchers believe that well-educated library personnel in management issues would be able to intervene more dynamically in decision making, propose changes in the

Figure 6 Differences in Experience Skills across Position

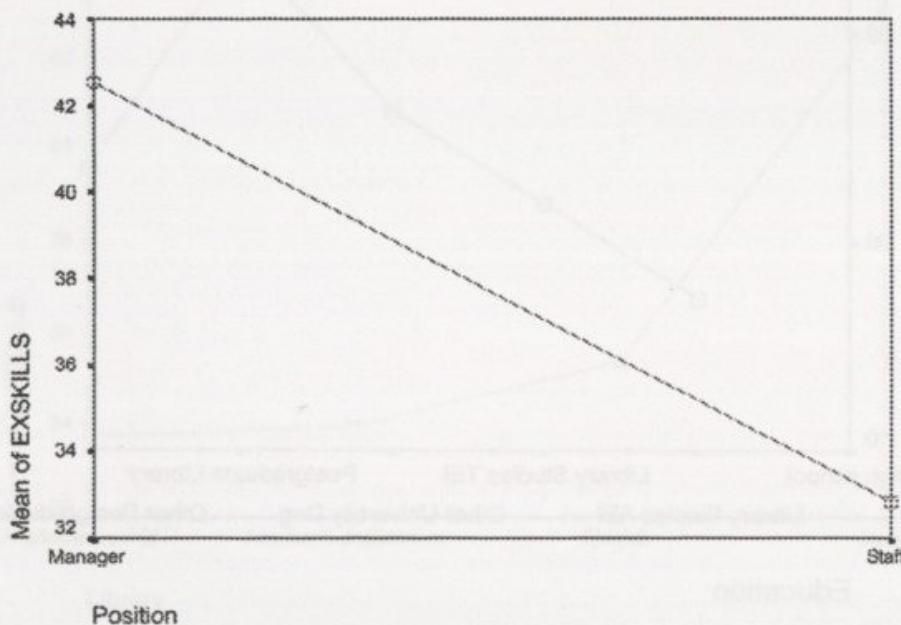
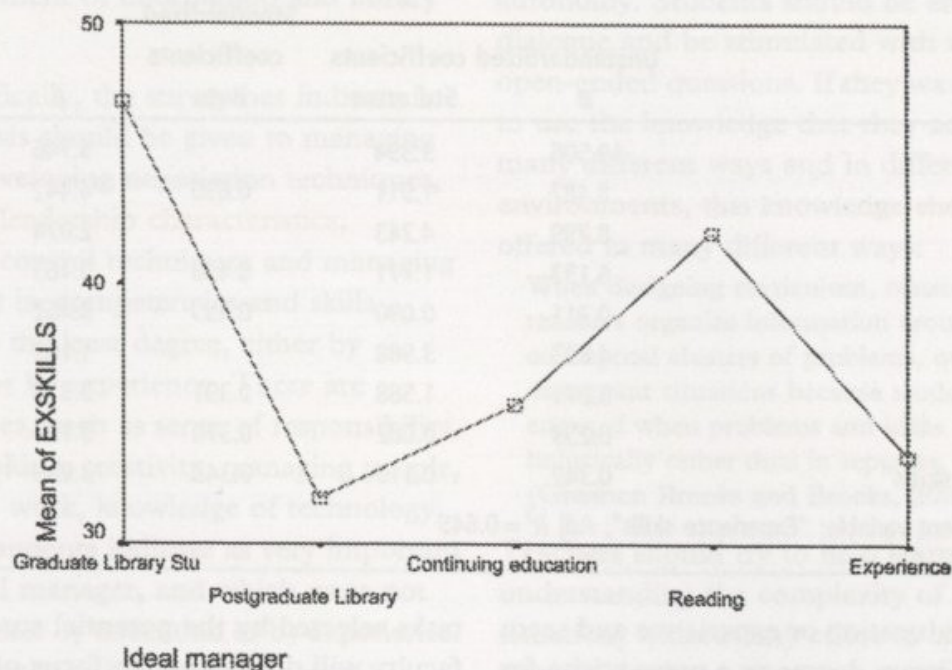


Figure 7 Differences in Experience skills across Ideal manager



organisational structure of libraries and undertake more responsibilities in the management of their institutions.

The fact that only 26 per cent of the respondents answered questions concerning skills acquired from education, although 66 per cent of them possess a library studies degree, stresses the need for more emphasis on these issues; all library professionals, in any position, should be equipped with basic managerial skills. It is common practice now to require managerial tasks from cataloguers given the priorities and decisions they have to make regarding retrospective cataloguing and conversion, outsourcing technical services,

and the costs associated with these activities. It is necessary, therefore, for any continuing or master's degree programmes to focus on the development of competencies that are lacking.

We should also emphasise that the respondents who are more active in the set of jobs believe that they obtained their skills through experience, and pay more attention to the qualifications needed for an ideal manager. Emphasis should be given to the fact that respondents who choose a master's programme as the best way for improving their managerial competencies and skills believe to have acquired less managerial skills

Table IX Pearson's correlation

	"Jobs"	"Education skills"	"Experience skills"	"Profile"
"Jobs"				
Pearson correlation	1.000	0.222	0.651*	0.237*
Significance (two-tailed)	0.000	0.134	0.000	0.006
<i>n</i>	152	47	80	133
"Education skills"				
Pearson correlation	0.222	1.000	0.447*	-0.066
Significance (two-tailed)	0.134	0.000	0.002	0.650
<i>n</i>	47	56	44	49
"Experience skills"				
Pearson correlation	0.651*	0.447*	1.000	0.203
Significance (two-tailed)	0.000	0.002	0.000	0.065
<i>n</i>	80	44	96	83
"Profile"				
Pearson correlation	0.237*	-0.066	0.203	1.000
Significance (two-tailed)	0.006	0.650	0.065	0.000
<i>n</i>	133	49	83	164

Note: *Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed)

Table X Experience skills versus years, Jobs and Education skills

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients		Significance
	B	Std error	Beta	t	
1 (Constant)	19.506	3.394		5.746	0.000
Years	8.487	1.911	0.630	4.442	0.000
2 (Constant)	8.799	4.243		2.074	0.047
Years	6.132	1.771	0.455	3.463	0.002
Jobs	0.311	0.090	0.455	3.462	0.002
3 (Constant)	4.633	3.988		1.162	0.255
Years	5.271	1.588	0.391	3.318	0.003
"Jobs"	0.253	0.082	0.370	3.104	0.004
"Education skills"	0.349	0.115	0.348	3.038	0.005

Notes: Dependent variable: "Experience skills"; Adj $R^2 = 0.645$

either from education or experience and seem to accept a library degree as a prerequisite for an ideal manager.

Methodology for curriculum development

The curriculum and the content of the courses will be developed as a collaborative effort, engaging various players: instructors from library and management departments, library directors and professionals and potential learners. Library employees, who participated in the survey and indicated an interest in attending continuing education programmes or a master's degree course, are considered as potential learners and a selected number of them will be engaged in the development of the courses. This collaboration is essential in order to establish a partnership in learning culture and communicate ideas concerning the objectives, the processes and the outcomes of learning. The users must be associated with all stages of the process from the definition of user requirements, to the design of prototypes and evaluation of the system (Crawley, 2002). A follow-up survey should provide in-depth information for specific topics to be covered and instructional strategies to be used. On the other hand, faculty will bring into this collaborative effort their theoretical and pedagogical knowledge, while practitioners and potential learners will pinpoint the real-world demands and contribute to the formation of a pragmatic picture, bringing in authentic tasks and problems to be solved during the educational process. The authentic

tasks selected by the potential students and faculty will determine the focus of the courses, whereas the requirements of these tasks will determine the type of learning and reading activities.

Accepting that each individual constructs his learning models, depending on his own experience and environment, efforts should be made to develop transferable management skills, which will enable learners to perform in new and different environments. Around these themes the team should develop the various modules, define the content of master's or continuing education programmes, decide about the instructional methods to be used, the way the programmes will be evaluated, as well as the sources to be used. The topics will be discussed by the team in a non-linear way, should be interwoven and should appear recursively over and over again:

In a recursive non-linear model many decisions are made over and over, and developers begin the process of instructional design without a crisp, clear definition of where they are headed (Willis, 1995).

The content

The objectives and the content of any library management programme is one of the focal points to be discussed. Taking into consideration the international practice, the literature and the rapid developments of Greek libraries, possible themes that should be considered for inclusion are:

- the role information plays in modern society;
- impact of information technology in libraries;

- management theories and principles; and
- management of information and library services.

More specifically, the survey has indicated that emphasis should be given to managing budgets, developing negotiation techniques, developing leadership characteristics, developing control techniques and managing people; that is, competencies and skills obtained to the least degree, either by education or by experience. There are competencies, such as sense of responsibility, decision making, creativity, managing people, team-based work, knowledge of technology, which respondents indicate as very important for the ideal manager, and which were not acquired either by education or by experience. These are areas to be considered and emphasised when planning either a master's programme or continuing education programmes.

Instructional strategies

A focal point also to be considered is the selection of the best way for the course content to be introduced to learners, and, more specifically, the instructional strategies suitable in terms of objectives and learners' characteristics. Also, the way the instructional strategies will be implemented and the media or other resources necessary for effective learning to be chosen.

Courses should be developed around the principles that communication and problem-based learning are essential for effective learning:

By approaching initially ambiguous situations through conversations, negotiations, and authentic activities, the learners add the texture that facilitates their construction of meaning and understanding (Yang, 2001).

Other elements to be considered are the use of metaphors or analogies, which should be coupled with practical work to avoid ambiguities. Teachers should not rely on textbooks only and require rote memorization, but challenge the learner's thinking. The use of bibliography, the retrieval of relevant information by the learners themselves, the solution of real problems, the assignment of tasks that require high order reasoning should play a dominant role in the educational process and will assist

in developing students' initiative and autonomy. Students should be engaged in dialogue and be stimulated with thoughtful, open-ended questions. If they want to be able to use the knowledge that they acquire in many different ways and in different environments, this knowledge should be offered in many different ways:

When designing curriculum, constructivist teachers organize information around conceptual clusters of problems, questions, and discrepant situations because students are most engaged when problems and ideas are presented holistically rather than in separate, isolated parts (Grennon Brooks and Brooks, 2001, p. 46).

Teachers should try to help learners in understanding the complexity of any situation, without any effort to simplify things. However, whatever methodology or theory we follow it does not mean that we abandon the content of what we believe the students should be taught and the skills they should acquire. The goals of any course should be clear to the learner. Despite all the liberty and the efforts to trigger the learners' initiative, a pattern should always be followed and should guide the team.

Learners have individual ways of acquiring knowledge; some can learn by listening, others by reading, while others by visual images or by actual doing things themselves. Various teaching methods and tools should be employed to satisfy any learning styles. The use of technology should be considered a prerequisite for the development of instructional material. One of the tools that should be used is hypermedia. By incorporating images, graphics, text and with its linking capabilities, hypermedia allows nonlinear thinking, multiple tasks to be accomplished and collaboration between learners, without the need for them to be in the same place.

Also, instructors should have continuous feedback from students and work close with them to improve their teaching methods and material.

Along a similar line, classroom assessments should aim at involving students in the learning process and not merely at grading them. Eliciting answers, papers, reports from students and sharing them with everybody in the course should allow students to compare their knowledge, skills and understanding with those of others and be active partners in the whole process.

Quality assurance

It is inevitable that, in the development of any educational programme, evaluation is another focal point to be considered. Following the already accepted pattern of openness, collaboration, communication and co-operation the team responsible for the preparation of the management courses will also be responsible for the evaluation of the programmes. Formative evaluation should take place during the process of preparing the programmes by the team. Each member of the team should contribute in the evaluation process, according to his or her educational and professional background. However, the programme should not be offered for only one year and only for the specific participants.

A mechanism of quality assurance needs to be considered for the periodical evaluation of any programme. It is important that educational institutions realise this need and accept quality assessment as a necessary component of their life-cycle. It is equally important for the state to establish objectives and criteria for any programme of quality assurance. According to Colling and Harvey (1995), any system of quality assurance should be practical, effective, efficient, and allow for accountability, quality enhancement and a degree of autonomy. Recently, methods of assessing quality in industry have been applied to educational institutions, as well, and service quality has started to attract attention in higher education. The SERVQUAL model, which was introduced in 1988 in marketing and has been used since then in both educational institutions and libraries (Praisseau and McDaniel, 1997; Nitecki and Hernon, 2000), could be used as an instrument to assess and measure the quality of the library management programmes to be designed. According to this model, consumers of any service evaluate the product they receive in the areas of:

- *reliability*: the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately;
- *responsiveness*: willingness to help customers and provide prompt service;
- *assurance*: knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence;
- *empathy*: caring, individualised attention the firm provides its customers; and

- *tangibles*: physical facilities, equipment, and the appearance of personnel (Zeithaml *et al.*, 1990).

[We] ... need to better understand what influences users' judgments of service quality, what is expected from specific services, and what improvements in service design and delivery are effective. [We] need to understand [our] users not merely as recipients of services offered, but as partners in the development and implementation of services to make higher education and research experiences more successful from the customer's perspective (Nitecki, 1996).

However, the authors think that our main concern should still be the development of independent, thinking individuals with the right knowledge, attitudes and skills to perform their duties. As the recipients of these library management courses will be mature students, with professional degrees and experience, their contribution to the measurement of the quality of service will be even more significant.

As a conclusion, the authors should point out that there is definitely a need for developing library management education programmes based on a new structure which will "portray the student as a thinker, a creator, and a constructor" (Grennon Brooks and Brooks, 2001, p. 126). Continuous communication between library schools, library associations, library professionals and the job market is necessary to ensure that quality programmes are offered, aiming at satisfying existing needs and anticipating new demands.

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