

The Gender Profile of Library and Information Science (LIS) Academics in South African Universities

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Abstract

Although the Library and Information Science (LIS) profession has historically been regarded as female dominated a minority of males have however held dominant management positions in LIS organisations while females have occupied lower service positions. The training of LIS professionals is offered at various higher education institutions in South Africa. Drawing on the gender divide in the field this article reports on a study that investigated the gender profile of LIS programmes at 10 South African universities where LIS training is provided. The purpose of the study was to establish if LIS programmes were predominately staffed by female academics that were of a lower rank than their male counterparts and were less likely to hold senior leadership positions in the programmes. The study used the survey method to gather statistical data of LIS academics through drawing out the participants, gender, rank and their qualifications from the websites of the LIS programmes at South African universities. To supplement the data obtained from the websites follow-up interviews were conducted with the heads of LIS programmes at the universities. In terms of the gender profile more than half of the academic staff of the LIS programmes at the South African universities consisted of females. However, unlike the professional LIS sector, female academics did not dominate the LIS academic sector. Thus the gender divide that exists in the field also occurs amongst LIS academics. Based on these findings it is recommended that universities should be employing more female LIS academics to more senior positions or should be ensuring that female academics are promoted to these senior ranked positions given that they hold the necessary qualifications to occupy such positions.

Keywords: gender divide, South Africa LIS education, LIS academics, South African universities

Introduction

Women have consistently made up a large majority of librarians, and librarianship is widely considered to be a female-dominated profession. The LIS profession has also seen the emergence of a minority-dominated male management force, despite the overwhelming majority of female librarians. Golub (2009) argues that this gender divide between female librarians as the majority occupying lower positions and the minority of male librarians assuming higher-level and higher-paying management positions has greatly impacted on the status of librarianship as a profession throughout the last century. Given the divide that exists in the profession the aim of this study was to establish a gender profile to determine if such a gender divide exists between academics in South African universities that train LIS professionals. Recent studies relating to the training of LIS professionals such as the study by Dillon and Norris (2005) were conducted as a result of the criticism levelled at LIS training institutions programmes which are male-dominated and do not meet the needs of practitioners. This study will only consider the criticism relating to the gender profile of LIS academics in South Africa.

Many scholars have investigated the historical development of LIS education in Africa and have highlighted the importance and role of LIS programmes and academics for the continent. Such scholars have included Onyancha and Minishi-Majanja (2009); Ocholla and Bothma (2007); Raju (2005); Minishi-Majanja and Ocholla (2004); Kigongo-Bukenya (2003); Ocholla (2003 and 2000); Le Roux (2002) and Kaniki (1997). However, these studies have not commented on the gender profile of LIS academics at African or South African LIS higher education institutions. Although there is no universal definition of the LIS field or sector the definition adopted for the purpose of this study is that the field includes both the library, archival and records and document management sectors. The objective of the current study was to establish if LIS programmes are predominantly occupied by female academics that were of a lower rank than their male counterparts and were less likely to hold senior leadership positions in the programmes. The study was thus guided by the following research questions:

Gender Profile of Library and Information Science (LIS) Academics

- What is the gender profile of LIS academic at South African universities?
- What is the rank of LIS academics at South African universities?
- What are the qualifications of LIS academics at South African universities?
- Does a gender divide exist between LIS academics at South African universities?

The focus of the study was limited to South African traditional and comprehensive universities¹ and did not include universities of technology who are required in terms of the South African Higher Education Qualification Framework to train paraprofessionals in the LIS field. According to the study carried out by Imenda (2005) in the South African context, traditional universities focuses on ‘high-level scientific research, with the spirit of pursuing knowledge for its own sake’ while the university of technology emphasises ‘the applied value of knowledge and cultivation of job-related skills’ (Imenda 2005: 1413). Also, the study did not examine LIS curricula offered at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels rather focusing on the gender, qualifications and ranks of academic staff members at the LIS schools. Furthermore, the study was limited to permanent LIS academic staff and therefore excluded honorary and extraordinary professors (these are professors who usually do not hold a chair and are at a subordinate level to that of a professor who holds a chair), research fellows, and part-time LIS staff. The Transformation Charter of the University of KwaZulu-Natal (University of KwaZulu-Natal 2012) provides the conceptual framework for the study. One of the aspirations of the Charter is to reflect race and gender representation in its management structures, personnel profile, and student population and the University is committed to non-racialism and non-sexism. According to the Charter race and gender should be reflected across all structures in the following ways:

¹ In South Africa traditional universities offer theoretically-orientated university degrees while comprehensive universities offer both theoretically-orientated university degrees and vocational orientated diplomas and degrees (SAUVCA 2006).

- The staff profile of the University at all occupational levels should reflect the demographics of our province and country;
- Gender equity within the management levels of the University will be ensured, and women should be adequately represented in all management structures;
- The implementation of employment equity and the advancement of designated groups within the University structures should be part of the performance management requirements of all line managers;
- Mentorship programmes that develop, support and nurture black and female academic staff members should be provided; and
- Mentorship and professional development programmes that attract and retain staff of the highest calibre, develop all staff to their full potential, and meet equity objectives should be developed (University of KwaZulu-Natal 2012: 2).

Literature Review

The LIS Profession and the Gender Divide

Evidence for the gender divide that exists in the LIS profession is found in the works of authors such as Golub (2009) and Hildenbrand (1992). Golub (2009) commenting on the historical overview of the gender divide in the LIS profession in the United States describes this gender divide as one that exists between a majority of female librarians occupying lower positions in the LIS profession and the minority of male librarians assuming higher-level and higher-paying management positions. The gender divide and the association of librarianship with a lower status due to its female-dominated work have greatly impacted on the status of librarianship as a profession. This lack of status has caused many problems for the profession, including the continuing challenges of recruitment, persistent low salaries, and the poor image of librarianship. Although professional changes in the early twentieth century North American work force caused male librarians to become the minority in librarianship as an emerging profession, they still dominated in terms of position and salary. Commenting on a 1904 report entitled, 'Women in American Libraries', Fairchild as cited in Hildenbrand (1992) found that male librarians were more likely to be in better-paying and managerial

positions than female librarians, and that men received higher pay for the same work.

Golub (2009) notes that during the 1990s, women began to make progress bridging the gender divide and entered management positions in greater numbers. Fisher cited in Record and Green (2008) conducted a study on gender and management trends in librarianship in 1997 in North American academic, public and special libraries. Fisher found that there were three times the number of women in management positions than men and that only 19% of men occupied top managerial positions. However, Fisher also found that men occupied the majority of director positions in large and medium size academic libraries and in large public libraries, and that men were still disproportionately represented in many other categories of the profession, despite being the minority (Fisher as cited in Record and Green 2008). In a study on the status of women in librarianship and the motivation to manage, Murgai (2004) discussed the significant advances women had made in the United States. Since the 1980s, more women than men earned their master's and doctoral degrees, and women occupied 51 out of 111 Association of Research Libraries (ARL) director positions (Deiss as cited in Murgai 2004). Similarly, Greer, Stephens and Coleman (2001) found that North American libraries began to see an increase in the proportion of top management positions held by women around the turn of the twenty-first century (from 1990 to 2001), the percentage of female directors of the ARL increased from 37% to 47%.

However, less than 8% of women held top positions in administration (Murgai 2004), and women still earned 23.5% less to the dollar compared to their male counterparts (Deissas cited in Murgai 2004). This reveals that even though more women were occupying management positions in the LIS field, they were earning less than their male counterparts.

The Department of Arts and Culture (DAC) report (2010) has provided the most recent statistical data on the South African LIS field (sector). The DAC report was based on a survey of the LIS sector which involved library services, archival services, and records management. The DAC survey investigated 13 academic institutions which included universities of technology. The study found that in 2009, a majority of the employees in the sector were females (71.4%) while males (28.6%) made up the rest of the sector. This reveals that the LIS sector is dominated by females in South Africa. The report also emphasised that females occupied 72.5% of

the management positions, 81.9% of the librarian positions and 74% of the library assistant positions. Contrary to Golub's (2009) findings, more females in South Africa were occupying management positions, which is similar to the findings of Fischer's study. However, a similar percentage of females were occupying low positions at the library assistants' level. However, there were less women (38.7%) than men (61.3%) working as archivists in South Africa.

In terms of highest educational qualifications, the DAC report highlights that most of the LIS professionals held National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Level 6 or Level 7 qualifications and 12.8% had Level 6 diplomas and 31.3% had first degrees. Therefore, 35.1% held Level 7 qualifications (postgraduate diploma or an honours degree) and only 4.2% held masters' or doctoral degrees. Thus less than half the practitioners had a postgraduate qualification.

LIS Academics and the Gender Divide

A study by Wilson, Kennan, Willard and Boell (2010) investigated the academic status of LIS educators in Australia from 1959 to 2008. The study documented the distribution of LIS academics in Australian higher education institutions over fifty years: beginning in the 1960s, up to and including the 1990s. The results of the study covered other characteristics of Australian LIS educators over the fifty-year period including: previous positions held before entering academia, what and where academic qualifications were obtained and academic position or rank by gender. Wilson, Kennan, Willard and Boell (2010:9) found that of the 693 Australian LIS academics surveyed, the gender of 661 could be determined: 416 (63%) were females and 245 were (37%) males. Although fewer in numbers, male academics on average remained in academia longer than females: nearly eight years for male and 6.5 years for female LIS academics.

In terms of females holding top positions in their programmes, Wilson, Kennan, Willard and Boell (2010) found that there were 239 (51%) females in top positions. On the other hand, there were fewer males overall (245 for 37%) in top positions. However, proportionally these males served more staff-years in top positions (226 for 49%) than their female counterparts.

To address a growing gender divide between information-science

oriented male educators versus library-science oriented female academics Gorman (2004) and Dillon and Norris (2005) used the Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE) *Library and Information Science Education Statistical Report 2006* statistical data for faculty gender ratios from 1975 to 2003 in the United States. Although there was a near 60:40 male to female ratio from 1975 to 1976 until about 1985 to 1986, it has been near parity since 1993 to 1994 with slightly more (52%) females in 2004 to 2005 and 2005 to 2006 (Saye & Wallace 2009). Further analysis of the ALISE statistical data for gender ratios by positions or rank resulted in 'near parity' ratios in 2002 to 2003 for assistant or associate professors with numbers favouring females and a 60:40 male to female ratio for deans or directors and full professors.

Commenting on the North American context Wilson, Kennan, Willard and Boell (2010:4) refer to information on 56 LIS schools in the United States and Canada offering accredited degree programmes in 2005 to 2006 from the same ALISE report above (Saye and Wallace 2009). They listed 828 academics with nearly equal numbers of males and females; a mean of nearly 15 academics per LIS school, with a range of five to 41 academics of which nearly 91% had PhDs (from 60% in three schools to 100% in 26 schools).

To establish if a gender divided exists amongst the academics that train the professionals an examination of LIS schools or programmes and their historical development on the African continent is essential. Generally the LIS schools had started early on the African continent. South Africa initiated LIS training at higher education institutions from 1933 following the 1928 recommendations of the Carnegie Corporation commissioners S. A. Pitt and M. J. Ferguson (Musiker 1986:91). However, Ocholla (2000:35) opines that LIS training and education in South Africa really began in 1938 and other African countries have commonly promoted LIS schools after 1960. The author further noted that in the 1980s there were five well known LIS academics based in Uganda, Nigeria, Ghana and Senegal (Ocholla 2000:35) and South Africa had counted 18 higher education institutions who offered LIS programmes. However, these LIS programmes had declined within a period of seven years from 2000 to 2006 from eighteen to eleven (Ocholla and Bothma 2007).

South Africa has specifically experienced a decrease of LIS schools in the last decade as described above. Raju and Jacobs (2009:34) argue that

the main reason for this decrease is a result of the transformation of the higher education sector in South Africa. This has resulted in some South African universities merging and the re-orientation of academic departments. The core focus of LIS academics was originally librarianship but currently some LIS education institutions in South Africa do not merely target the training and education of librarians, for instance LIS schools at the University of Johannesburg and Stellenbosch have re-oriented their programmes and their curricula cover only information and knowledge management while librarianship is excluded (Ocholla & Bothma 2007:151).

Raju and Jacobs (2009:33) argue that professional education continues to develop to accommodate the new role functions of librarians. Such functions include the teaching of information literacy skills and facilitating access to research. In addition, LIS professionals work at the professional level engaging in high-level planning, development, design and evaluation (Tin and Al-Hawamdeh 2002:334). In this regard, LIS academics have to be well educated, efficiently supported and motivated by their universities (employers) in order to be able to teach in safety and friendly working environments to produce LIS professionals. A survey of over 55 LIS schools in Africa by Onyancha and Minishi-Majanja (2009) found that LIS educators in Africa generally have PhDs and are suitably qualified for appointments in academia; however, uncompetitive remuneration within the academic sector has resulted in a scarcity of qualified candidates. In terms of the size of the teaching units the authors found that most LIS teaching units are small averaging about six and ranging from three to 24 academics. Commenting on the rank of the LIS academics Onyancha and Minishi-Majanja (2009) noted that since senior positions such as full professors are not readily available in small teaching units, LIS academics wishing to advance their careers either leave academia or join university administrative units.

Methodology

Research methodologies revolve around two major approaches, namely quantitative and qualitative (Creswell 1994: 1). Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were applied in this study. The combination of two or more methodologies in a single study is described by Babbie and Mouton (2001: 257) as methodological triangulation which may lead to more valid

and reliable findings. Similarly, Sarantakos (1998: 168) describes the main reasons for using triangulation. These include: to obtain a variety of information on the same issues; to use the strengths of each method to overcome the deficiencies of the other; and to achieve a higher degree of validity and reliability.

Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999: 45) point out that 'data is basic material with which researchers work'. Neuman (2009: 144) argues that 'surveys are the most widely used data-gathering technique in the social sciences and other fields'. The 10 South African universities that offer LIS programmes were surveyed. These were, University of South Africa (UNISA), University of Johannesburg (UJ), University of Pretoria (UP), University of Limpopo (UL), University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), University of Zululand (UNIZUL), University of Fort Hare (UFH), University of Cape Town (UCT), University of Western Cape (UWC), and University of Stellenbosch (SU). The article used the survey method to gather statistical data of LIS academics through drawing out the participants, gender, rank and their qualifications from their websites. The website of the Library and Information Association of South Africa (LIASA) which contained the website addresses and contact details of the LIS programmes provided the sample framework for the study. Of the 10 South African universities that were surveyed all but one, the University of Limpopo, did not have a dedicated LIS website and could not be contacted via the e-mail address or telephone numbers supplied by the LIASA website. The survey yielded a good response rate of 90%. To supplement the data obtained from the websites follow-up interviews were conducted with the heads of LIS programmes at the universities. The semi-structured interview schedule was pre-test on two part-time LIS academics at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. This was necessary given the temporal nature of information found on websites since the information can be removed without notice or may be lost due to broken links on webpages. The interviews with the heads of LIS programmes were conducted telephonically since they are geographically dispersed throughout the provinces of South Africa. In terms of ethical considerations the heads consented to participate in the study and were informed telephonically of the aim and purpose of the study, that anonymity and confidentiality were assured and they could withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice to themselves or their programmes. Many of the websites had information that was dated and inaccurate therefore the

interviews with the heads provided more accurate data on the staff profiles. The data was collected during the months of June and July 2012 and was analyzed using frequency and descriptive counts and represented in the form of tables.

Results and Discussion

The presentation and discussion of the results follows the research questions of the study.

Gender Profile of LIS Academic at South African Universities

Table 1 reveals the gender profile of the nine LIS programmes at South African universities who responded to the survey.

Table 1: Gender Profile of LIS Academics

Institution	N=96		
	Females	Males	Total
UP	18 (33.3%)	8 (19%)	26 (27.1%)
UNISA	13 (20.1%)	6 (14.3%)	19 (19.8%)
SU	1 (1.9%)	9 (21.4%)	10 (10.4%)
UJ	5 (9.3%)	4 (9.5%)	9 (9.4%)
UCT	4 (7.4%)	1 (2.4%)	5 (5.2%)
UKZN	3 (5.5%)	2 (4.8%)	5 (5.2%)
UFH	1 (1.9%)	3 (7.1%)	4 (4.2%)
UNIZUL	5 (9.3%)	7 (16.7%)	12 (12.5%)
UWC	4 (7.4%)	2 (4.8%)	6 (6.3%)
Total	54 (56.3%)	42 (43.4%)	96 (100%)
Mean			10.7

Table 1 shows that UP had the largest staff complement of LIS academics of 26 (27.1%) followed by UNISA with 19 (19.8%) and SU with 10 (10.4%) LIS academics. This finding would suggest that historically advantaged institutions such as UP and SU had larger LIS staff complements or programmes. Of the nine LIS programmes UP had the most female LIS academics with 18 (33.3%) followed by UNISA with 13 (20.1%) and UJ and

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UNIZUL with five each. Of the nine LIS programmes SU had the most male academics with nine (21.4%) followed by UP with eight (19%) and UNIZUL with seven (16.7%). This reveals that even at a historically disadvantaged institution the LIS programme was staffed by more males. On average there are 10.7 academics across each of the nine LIS programmes that responded to the survey. This is in keeping with Onyancha and Minishi-Majanja (2009) who found that most LIS teaching units are small averaging about six and ranging from three to 24 academics.

Female LIS academics made up more than half, 56.3% (54), of the staff members in the LIS programmes while males accounted for 43.4% (42) of the LIS academics. This is in keeping with the studies of Wilson, Kennan, Willard and Boell (2010:9) who found that of the 693 Australian LIS academics surveyed 416 (63%) were females and 245 were (37%) males. In North America, Saye and Wallace (2009) listed 828 LIS academics in the ALISE report with nearly equal numbers of males and females with a mean of nearly 15 academics per LIS school and a range of five to 41 academics.

Rank of LIS Academics at South African Universities

Table 2 reveals the rank of the LIS academics at the South African universities.

Table 2: Rank of LIS Academics

Institution	N=96						
	Jnr	Assist Lect	Lect	Snr Lect	Assoc Prof	Prof	Total
UCT	0	0	0	1 (9.1%)	3 (33.3%)	1 (6.7%)	5 (5.2%)
UFH	0	0	2 (4.9%)	1 (9.1%)	1 (11.1%)	0	4 (4.2%)
UKZN	0	0	2 (4.9%)	1 (9.1%)	0	2 (13.3%)	5 (5.2%)
UP	5 (50%)	10 (100%)	4 (9.7%)	3 (27.3%)	1 (11.1%)	3 (20%)	26 (27.1%)
SU	0	0	7 (17.1%)	0	0	3 (20%)	10 (10.4%)
UWC	0	0	3 (7.3%)	1 (9.1%)	1 (11.1%)	1 (6.7%)	6 (6.2%)

UJ	0	0	5 (12.2%)	2 (18.2%)	0	2 (13.3%)	9 (9.4%)
UNISA	5 (50%)	0	10 (24.4%)	0	2 (22.2%)	2 (13.3%)	19 (19.8%)
UNIZUL	0	0	8 (19.5%)	2 (18.2%)	1 (11.1%)	1 (6.7%)	12 (12.5%)
Total	10 (10.4%)	10 (10.4%)	41 (42.7%)	11 (11.5%)	9 (9.4%)	15 (15.6%)	96 (100%)
	61 (63.5%)			35 (36.5%)			

Most of the academics in the nine LIS programmes, 41 (42.7%), held the rank of lecturer. This was followed by 15 (15.6%) academics who were professors and 11 (11.5%) of the LIS academics were senior lecturers. The percentage of senior staff from the ranks of senior lecturer, associate professor and professor, 36.5% (35), was less than that for the ranks of junior lecturer, assistant lecture and lecturer which constituted a majority of 63.5% (61) of the academic staff in the nine LIS programmes in South African universities. This result does lend support to Onyancha and Minishi-Majanja (2009) findings that since senior positions such as full professors are not readily available in small teaching units, LIS academics leave academia or join university administrative units to advance their careers.

Qualifications of LIS Academics at South African Universities

Table 3 shows the highest qualifications of the LIS academics at the nine South African universities.

Table 3: Qualifications of LIS Academics

Institution	N=96			
	Degree	Honours	Masters	PhD
UP	9 (90%)	4 (50%)	5 (12.8%)	8 (20.5%)
UNISA	1 (10%)	3 (37.5%)	8 (20.5%)	7 (18%)
UCT	0	0	0	5 (12.8%)
UWC	0	0	2 (5.1%)	4 (10.2%)
UJ	0	0	5 (12.8%)	4 (10.2%)
UNIZUL	0	0	8 (20.5%)	4 (10.2%)
SU	0	0	7 (18%)	3 (7.7%)
UKZN	0	0	2 (5.1%)	3 (7.7%)

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UFH	0	1 (12.5%)	2 (5.1%)	1 (2.6%)
Total	10 (10.4%)	8 (8.3%)	39 (40.6%)	39 (40.6%)
	18 (18.7%)		78 (81.2%)	

Table 3 shows that an equal number of LIS academics, 39 (40.6%), at the nine South African universities held a masters and PhD qualification given that academics are required to have a minimum of a masters qualification to teach and a PhD to supervise student work. Thus a majority of the LIS academics, 81.2% (78) held a higher qualification with only 10 (10.4%) holding an undergraduate degree followed by eight (8.3%) who held an honours degree. This result is in keeping with the survey of Onyancha and Minishi-Majanja (2009) of over 55 LIS schools in Africa which found that LIS educators in Africa generally have PhDs and are suitably qualified for appointments in academia. However, when compared with the North American LIS academics of whom 91% held a PhD qualification (Saye & Wallace 2009), South African LIS academics lagged behind with less than half the percentage of their North American counterparts, 40.6%, holding a PhD. When compared with the practitioners the DAC report found that most of the LIS professionals held National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Level 6 or Level 7 qualifications whereas the academics mostly held NQF Level 8 Masters and Level 9 PhD qualifications.

Gender Divide between LIS Academics at South African Universities

Table 4 cross tabulates gender with the qualifications of the LIS academics in an attempt to establish whether female LIS academics were holding higher qualifications than their male counterparts.

Table 4: Cross Tabulation of Gender and Qualifications of LIS Academics

Institution	N=96								Total
	Females				Males				
	PhD	Master	Hons	Degree	PhD	Master	Hons	Degree	
UCT	4 (16.7%)	0	0	0	1 (6.7%)	0	0	0	5 (5.2%)
UFH	0	0	1 (20%)	0	1 (6.7%)	2 (10.5%)	0	0	4 (4.2%)

UKZN	2 (8.3%)	1 (5%)	0	0	1 (6.7%)	1 (5.3%)	0	0	5 (5.2%)
UP	6 (25%)	5 (25%)	2 (40%)	5 (100%)	2 (13.3%)	0	2 (66.7%)	4(80%)	26 (27.1%)
SU	0	1 (5%)	0	0	3 (20%)	6 (31.6%)	0	0	10 (10.4%)
UWC	2 (8.3%)	2 (10%)	0	0	2 (13.3%)	0	0	0	6 (6.2%)
UJ	3 (12.5)	2 (10%)	0	0	1 (6.7%)	3 (15.8%)	0	0	9 (9.4%)
UNISA	5 (20.8%)	6 (30%)	2 (40%)	0	2 (13.3%)	2 (10.5%)	1 (33.3%)	1(20%)	19 (19.8%)
UNIZUL	2 (8.3%)	3 (15%)	0	0	2 (13.3%)	5 (26.3%)	0	0	12 (12.5)
Total	24 (25%)	20 (20.8%)	5 (5.2%)	5 (5.2%)	15 (15.6%)	19 (19.8%)	3 (3.1%)	5 (5.2%)	96 (100%)

Table 4 shows that more female LIS academics, 25%, held PhDs when compared with the 15.5% of males who held a PhD. Thus 9% of the female LIS academics held a higher qualification when compared with the male academics. However, an almost equal number of female and male LIS academics held masters and honours degrees with an equal number holding undergraduate degrees as their highest qualification.

Table 5 cross tabulates gender with the rank of the LIS academics in an attempt to respond to whether male LIS academics were holding higher ranks than their female counterparts.

Even though Table 4 revealed that more female LIS academics held a PhD than their Male counterparts, Table 5 shows that only four (4.2%) of the female academics were full professors compared to the 11 (11.4%) males who were professors. Thus there was more than double the number of male LIS professors than female professors at the nine South African universities. Given that many senior management positions require the rank of professor one can assume that many male LIS academics are more likely to occupy such positions given their rank. However, the opposite applied for the associate professorship rank where twice the number of female LIS academics, six (6.2%), held the rank of associate professorship compared with the three (3.1%) male LIS academics who held the rank. Also, more female LIS academics, nine (9.4%) held the rank of senior lecturer compared to the one male LIS academic who held the same rank.

Table 5: Cross Tabulation of Gender and Rank of LIS Academics

Institution	N=96											
	Females						Males					
	Prof	Assoc Prof	Snr Lect	Lect	Assist Lect	Jnr Lect	Prof	Assoc Prof	Snr Lect	Lect	Assist Lect	Jnr Lect
UCT	0	3(50%)	1 (11.1%)	0	0	0	1 (9.1%)	0	0	0	0	0
UFH	0	0	0	1 (4.2%)	0	0	0	1 (33.3%)	0	2 (11.1%)	0	0
UKZN	1 (25%)		1 (11.1%)	1 (4.2%)	0	0	1 (9.1%)	0	0	1 (5.5%)	0	0
UP	1 (25%)	1 (16.7%)	3 (33.3%)	4 (16.7%)	7 (100%)	2 (50%)	2 (18.2%)	0	0	0	3 (100%)	3 (50%)
SU	0	0	0	1 (4.2%)	0	0	3 (27.3%)	0	0	6 (33.3%)	0	0
UWC	0	1 (16.7%)	0	3 (12.5%)	0	0	1 (9.1%)	0	1 (100%)	0	0	0
UJ	1 (25%)	0	2 (22.2%)	2 (8.3%)	0	0	1 (9.1%)	0	0	3 (16.7%)	0	0
UNISA	1 (25%)	1 (16.7)	0	9 (37.5%)	0	2 (50%)	1 (9.1%)	1 (33.3%)	0	1 (5.5%)	0	3 (50%)
UNIZ UL	0	0	2 (22.2%)	3 (12.5%)	0	0	1 (9.1%)	1 (33.3%)	0	5 (27.8%)	0	0
Total	4 (4.2%)	6 (6.2%)	9 (9.4%)	24 (25%)	7 (7.3%)	4 (4.2%)	11 (11.4%)	3 (3.1%)	1 (1%)	18 (18.8%)	3 (3.1%)	6 (6.2%)

More female LIS academics 24 (25%) held the rank of lecturer followed closely by 18 (18.8%) of their male counterparts who held the lecturers rank. These results are in keeping with the ALISE statistical data for gender ratios by positions or rank which resulted in ‘near parity’ ratios in 2002 to 2003 for assistant or associate professors with numbers favouring females and a 60:40 male to female ratio for full professors (Saye & Wallace 2009).

Conclusions

In terms of the gender profile more than half of the academic staff of the nine LIS programmes at the South African universities consisted of females. However, unlike the professional LIS sector, female academics did not dominate the LIS academic sector. Most LIS academics held the position of lecturer. Proportionally more female LIS academics held a PhD qualification than their male counterparts at the nine South African universities surveyed.

However, in terms of rank less than half the number of female LIS academics, when compared with their male counterparts, held the rank of full professor. Thus, even though twice as many females were qualified to hold such senior ranks, very few of them are full professors. This suggest that there is a similarity in the gender divide that exists in the profession and amongst the LIS academics with fewer males occupying more senior positions as a result of their status or rank in the field. In terms of transformation gender equity within the management levels of the LIS programmes and the universities in general should be ensured, and women should be adequately represented in all management structures.

However, based on the findings presented above it would be difficult to conclude overall that a gender divide does exist amongst female and male LIS academics in South Africa universities. To this effect a more detailed analyses of the length of service and the gender profile of senior management positions in the LIS programmes should be undertaken.

Areas for further research should include a more detailed survey of all Southern African (South Africa, Botswana, Zimbabwe) as well as East African (Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda) LIS educators by way of a self-administered questionnaire to develop and overall understanding of existence of the gender divide amongst LIS educators on the continent. A study which examines the broader historical overview of the gender divide between LIS academics in South Africa and the countries listed above should be undertaken. Based on these findings it is recommended that South Africa universities should be employing more female LIS academics to more senior positions or should be ensuring that females are promoted to these senior ranked positions given that they hold the necessary qualifications to occupy such positions. The practical implications for the study are that universities should be giving effect to their transformation charters by ensuring that more female staff occupy senior management positions not only in the LIS programmes but also throughout the university academic structures.

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