

## **Immigrant Digital Librarian Barriers in Digital Service Library Management in South Sulawesi**

**Wahyuni Aras<sup>1</sup>, Tuti Bahfiarti\*<sup>1</sup>, Muh. Farid<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>123</sup>Department of Communication Sciences Faculty of Social and Political Sciences,  
Hasanuddin University, Makassar  
e-mail: <sup>1</sup>[wahyuniaras@gmail.com](mailto:wahyuniaras@gmail.com), <sup>\*2</sup>[tutibahfiarti@unhas.ac.id](mailto:tutibahfiarti@unhas.ac.id),  
<sup>3</sup>[faridemsil@yahoo.com](mailto:faridemsil@yahoo.com)

### **Abstract**

This research reveals the paradox of the presence of information technology in libraries, which should have a positive impact but instead becomes a hindrance for users. The main contributing factor is the lack of preparation and competence of librarians in information technology. The research aims to identify barrier factors influencing librarians in providing digital services in South Sulawesi. The research methodology uses a descriptive approach with interviews and observations of seven informants, including digital library managers, digital native librarians, digital immigrant librarians, and digital service users at Hasanuddin University Library. The findings show that adequate internal facilities and interactions support librarians' communication competencies, but challenges involve human resource quality, knowledge levels, lack of self-awareness among librarians, and inadequate education or training in interpersonal communication. This study provides valuable insights into the dynamics of libraries in the digital age, emphasizing the importance of addressing challenges to ensure librarians have effective digital service skills. Recommendations involve enhancing education and training programs to strengthen librarians' communication skills and raising awareness among librarians of their key role in the digital communication landscape.

**Keywords:** *Digital services, Immigrant, Librarian Barriers*

## **A. Introduction**

Librarians, serving as stewards and providers of services within library settings, hold a pivotal role in resource management and addressing user information needs. Information technology is acknowledged as a positive facet capable of enhancing the quality of library services. However, the utilization of technology frequently presents obstacles, impeding information access and resulting in user dissatisfaction. These impediments often stem from the preparedness and competency of librarians in adopting information technology. Considering the substantial operational costs involved, libraries necessitate adequately prepared and professional human resources to effectively navigate the challenges posed by globalization. Hence, it necessitates human resources that are adequate and professional in accordance with their competencies (Inskip, 2020).

Competence encompasses both fundamental and general competencies, representing essential skills individuals must acquire for personal development. Fundamental competencies serve as a prerequisite for self-improvement and the mastery of advanced competencies. On the other hand, general competence is crucial for fostering positive social interactions within family, workplace, and community settings. Fundamental competencies constitute the initial and indispensable skills or abilities necessary for attaining mastery in higher competencies (Nana Syaodih Sukmadinata, 2012). Conversely, general competence encompasses the skills required for various aspects of life, including family, educational, communal, and professional environments, (Siregar, 2015).

Competences, in the context of communication studies, refers to an individual's ability to communicate effectively. This competence encompasses an ability to communicate effectively, including understanding of the role of the environment (context) in influencing the content and form of communication messages (Devito, 2011). Communication is defined as a process of interaction infused with meaning among individuals (Tommy Suprpto, 2009). Consequently, knowledge of a particular topic may be deemed suitable for communication to a specific audience in a particular environment but may not be deemed suitable for another audience and environment.

In digital libraries, the role and duties of librarians will be emphasized more on teaching, consulting, researching, maintaining democratic access to

information, and collaborating with computer experts and scientists in designing and maintaining information access systems. They are also busy with information technology interactions to contribute to building a literate society (Yao & Xiao, 2022).

In the context of this study, immigrant digital librarians may encounter challenges in adapting to digital technology due to the generational gap between them and native digital librarians. Some of them may still employ the mindset and values of analog library management, which can impede their ability to provide digital services. Immigrant digital librarians require more time and effort to learn and understand digital technology, and not all of them possess the necessary technological skills to support their duties and functions.

As professionals, librarians are crucial for ensuring broad user access. Their communication competence, particularly amid technological advancements, is vital. Serving users effectively hinges on librarians' ability to convey information through clear communication, using both verbal and nonverbal means. Building relationships with users, understanding their needs, and choosing appropriate communication methods are integral to librarianship. Like A study conducted by (Boufarss & Harviainen, 2021) regarding changes in the scholarly communication landscape due to the emergence of open access (OA), the role of academic librarians as gatekeepers will transform into gate-openers. Librarians can act as facilitators to enhance OA adoption in the United Arab Emirates. This reference is crucial in motivating librarians to equip themselves to support the development of technology-based library services (Bishop et al., 2023).

The challenge of digital libraries is that librarians must be able to assume their role in mastering technology. A prominent obstacle associated with the onset of digital libraries pertains to librarians belonging to the digital immigrant generation, commonly referred to as the analog generation. This demographic was born before 1980, a period preceding widespread internet usage in Indonesia. These librarians face a series of unique challenges as they navigate the transition from traditional to digital information management. Their tasks involve not only acquiring proficiency in contemporary digital technologies but also redefining their roles within a rapidly evolving information landscape. This transition requires adapting established practices to integrate digital resources, mastering digital cataloging systems, and effectively navigating online databases.

Librarians from the digital immigrant generation face the dual challenge of preserving the core principles of traditional librarianship while embracing the opportunities and complexities introduced by the digital era. Through continuous training, collaboration, and a commitment to staying abreast of technological advancements, these librarians strive to bridge the gap between analog and digital realms, ensuring the continued relevance and accessibility of knowledge in the evolving digital library landscape. This generation knew the internet as adults, necessitating a learning period to adapt to new technology. Hence, the challenge of digital immigrant generation librarians is fascinating as they undergo a transformation from the analog to the digital era. Immigrant digital librarians dominate South Sulawesi, while most library users or users are digital natives. It raises the knowledge, motivation, and skills gap between immigrant and digital native digital librarians. Librarians of the digital generation must adapt to existing developments, so they may not be the same as digital natives in their work. They still use the mindset and values of analog library management. In addition, digital immigrants will not be like digital natives who feel comfortable in the digital world.

It cannot be a reason for a librarian to carry out professional duties in information management. They must be able to adapt to all generations by learning the technology and adopting it in its current activities. Immigrant digital librarians must be able to forge themselves into professionals who can provide services and satisfactory service to their customers, whether using or transferring manual or digital equipment, traditional technology, or sophisticated electronic technology. Facing this situation, librarians must have good communication competence to support the development of information technology, which keeps the relationship between librarians and users harmonious (Zhang et al., 2021).

Immigrant digital librarians need more time and effort in learning and understanding digital technology. So not all immigrant digital librarians have technological skills that support their duties and functions (Izuagbe et al., 2019). Therefore, researchers are interested in analyzing the barriers to immigrant digital librarians in managing digital service libraries in South Sulawesi, intending to know the barriers of immigrant digital librarians in managing digital service libraries in South Sulawesi.

## **B. Methods**

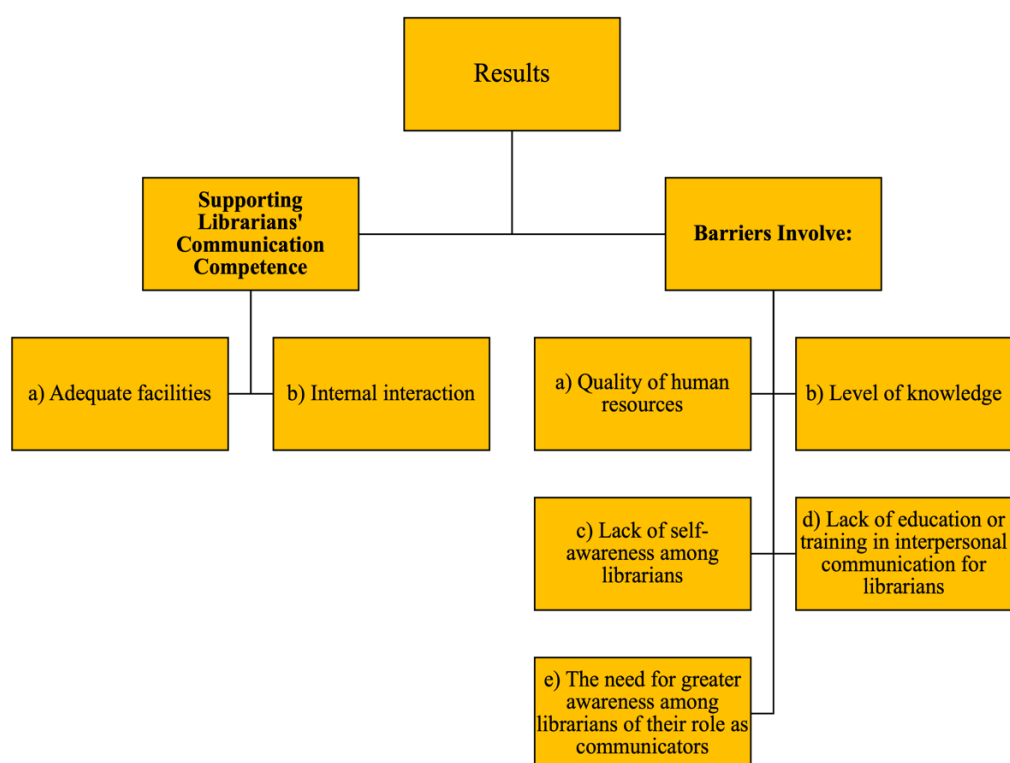
This study employs a qualitative research design to explore the challenges encountered by immigrant digital librarians in the administration of digital service libraries in South Sulawesi. The qualitative nature of the research aims to provide an in-depth understanding of the phenomena, including the motivations, knowledge, and skills of immigrant digital librarians in their roles.

Data collection involved the use of multiple instruments, namely observation, interviews, and documentation. The qualitative approach allows for a nuanced exploration of the experiences of immigrant digital librarians through rich descriptive narratives, employing words and language to capture the complexities of their roles in managing digital service libraries.

The informant selection process utilized purposive sampling techniques, ensuring the inclusion of individuals possessing pertinent information related to the study's subject. The study involved seven informants, strategically chosen to represent various perspectives. This included one digital library leader, two immigrant digital librarians who provided insights into their interactions, two native digital librarians serving as interacting partners in management, and two users of library digital services. By employing these qualitative research methods, the study seeks to unravel the unique challenges and opportunities faced by immigrant digital librarians, contributing valuable insights to the broader understanding of digital library management in the regional context of South Sulawesi.

## **C. Result And Discussion**

This study identifies two findings for supporting factors and at least five inhibiting factors. Supporting factors involve the presence of adequate facilities and internal interaction. Meanwhile, inhibiting factors consist of the quality of human resources, the level of knowledge, a lack of self-awareness among librarians, a deficiency in education or training in interpersonal communication for librarians, and the necessity for greater awareness among librarians of their role as communicators. These findings are illustrated in Figure 1:



**Figure 1; Research Findings Diagram**

The advancement of information technology and its integration has permeated various fields, including the storage of data and documents in libraries. This evolution begins with traditional libraries, comprised solely of book collections without catalogs, progressing to semi-modern libraries that employ catalogs (indexes). The catalog undergoes a transformation into an electronic format, facilitating quicker and more efficient retrieval of stored collections in the library.

Library collections are progressively transitioning to electronic formats, offering space efficiency, and facilitating easy rediscovery. A notable advancement in library evolution is the emergence of digital libraries, which prioritize access speed through digital data and computer network media (internet). In this era of knowledge, immigrant digital librarians are pioneers in embracing these transformations. Enhancing the value of information and knowledge, along with managing knowledge, conducting information literacy training, and multitasking, necessitates expertise beyond IT skills and knowledge in users' engaged areas.

Marshall McLuhan in 1962, has been introducing this theory in his work "The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man," shaping the discussion on how changes in communication methods influence human

existence. This theory posits that technology not only influences how individuals think and behave in society but also propels humanity from one technological century to the next. In the context of our research, it is exemplified by the transformation of librarians from an initial focus on analog library management to an emphasis on the quality of digital-based services or services adopting a hybrid concept.

From far ago, McLuhan anticipated that our culture would be molded by our modes of communication. Various stages must be considered. First, the invention of communication technology caused cultural change. Second, changes in various kinds of communication ultimately shape human life. Third, McLuhan says that humans learn, feel, and think about what they will do because of the messages that communication technology has provided for it to take place. In the sense that communication technology is a provider of messages and shapes our behavior (Ernawati & Muh. Resa Yudianto Suldani, 2020)

This what McLuhan wrote in his book 'Understanding Media' that the impact of technology does not occur at the level of opinions or concepts, but changes sensory ratios or perceptual patterns steadily and without resistance. McLuhan also added that the most crucial impact of communication media is the resulting influence on human thinking and perception habits and, In addition, McLuhan in 1960 in (Yusuf et al., 2020) stated about the influence of technology on human life, which began with customs, how to think, social life, economics, and many other things. Based on this explanation, this theory generally explains how technology, especially media, shapes individuals in society in thinking about something, feeling something, or doing specific actions.

This study uses the subject of librarians of the digital immigrant generation who went through a transformation phase from the analog to the digital era. Immigrant librarians establish communication with users and have better communication competence than those who only work without social interaction. Regarding immigrant digital librarians' skills, some still need to be skilled in using digital devices. It could be due to how much access they have to digital devices and existing digital services. As quoted from the results of an interview with the head of a digital library in South Sulawesi. Who assesses the communication competence of the librarian:

"Librarians' communication competence can be judged by how often they communicate. Those who continue to communicate with users tend to have better communication competence compared to those who only do work and lack social interaction. When it comes to their skills in using digital services, some immigrant digital librarians are not skilled in using digital facilities

perhaps because of their access to digital devices and existing digital services."

The study reveals also a noteworthy challenge faced by a subset of librarians, particularly those of the immigrant digital generation, wherein a pronounced obstacle exists in their ability to engage in public speaking. This impediment extends beyond formal presentations, encompassing daily discourse and general interactions. The study underscores that despite proficiency in digital services, some librarians need help to express themselves publicly, posing a potential hindrance to effective communication in various professional contexts.

In response to the identified obstacle, concerted efforts have been undertaken to enhance the communication skills of librarians. Recognizing the significance of effective public speaking as a crucial component of professional competence, interventions such as targeted training programs and workshops have been implemented. The study concludes that addressing this communication challenge is integral to ensuring that librarians, particularly those from the immigrant digital generation, possess a well-rounded skill set, allowing them to navigate diverse communication scenarios with confidence and efficacy in the ever-evolving landscape of librarianship (Soroka, 1975).

The study also requested an assessment from digital native librarians of immigrant digital librarians, stating:

"Sometimes fellow senior librarians still lack the confidence to appear to speak, even for small things, such as when following the circular of the Minister of State Apparatus Empowerment and Bureaucratic Reform (MenPANRB) Tjahjo Kumolo issued a letter to central and regional agencies regarding the appeal to listen to the song Indonesia Raya and read the Pancasila script effective from July 1, 2021. Although the text is effortless and has been known since childhood, there are still librarians who feel unable to do so."

The study highlights a positive aspect of the interaction between immigrant digital librarians and their digital native counterparts. Immigrant digital librarians acknowledge the commendable competence of young librarians in digital management, expressing a willingness to engage in collaborative learning experiences. They recognize the value of leveraging the expertise of digital natives, emphasizing the importance of analog service-related information in complementing digital services. This mutual acknowledgment and willingness to collaborate signify a constructive approach toward bridging the generational gap in library management.

The positive interaction between immigrant digital librarians and their



digital native peers underscores the importance of fostering collaborative environments within libraries. Acknowledging the strengths of each generation and promoting knowledge exchange contributes to a more holistic approach to library service development. Creating opportunities for effective communication and collaboration among librarians is crucial to enhancing digital-based service systems further. This study concludes that a supportive and collaborative environment promotes the sharing of valuable skills and instills motivation and confidence among immigrant digital librarians to contribute to the ongoing development of libraries in the digital era.

Other immigrant librarians assessed their interactions with native digital librarians as well as users/users in the management of digital services, saying:

"I can run a small quantity of some of the existing digital services. Nevertheless, when I was asked to explain the procedure to the users, I was still not fully confident. I still leave it to young librarians to explain to users or show procedures for utilizing digital services that have been created and stored in several places".

Furthermore, the assessment of native digital librarians provides an assessment of immigrant digital librarians. Which states that:

"Some senior librarians are reluctant to provide information to users who need digital services, and they tend to leave it to us young librarians. Because they feel that if they no longer need to learn digital services, they focus on print collection services and non-digital services. They already feel comfortable with their existing activities".

In line with the opinion of another native digital librarian (Informant 4) assessed immigrant digital librarians:

"Immigrant digital librarians have not been fully able to adapt to technology; when providing explanations to librarian users, they often communicate using the language as it is. To give an explanation but to give action is still lacking. Immigrant digital librarians lack understanding of digital content, lack interest in improving their competence, are comfortable with their old activities."

Furthermore, user responses in the interaction of library digital services, namely *e-repository* service users, are available in digital online and digital offline. (Informer 5):

"I need a collection of scientific papers in the form of hardcopy and softcopy as reference material in completing my final project. I have been to this place several times (on the 3rd floor of the library). When I first came here to ask about a subject of scientific work in hardcopy form, the senior librarian knew the location of the collection better than the young librarian. Although the language is as it is, through the information of the senior librarian, I can enjoy the hardcopy facility of scientific papers that I need. However, when I needed

a collection in the form of a softcopy, I was directed to the officer, who was still young, and I was given a more detailed explanation of the tracing procedure. Furthermore, it turns out that they have also set up written procedures near the tracing device."

Furthermore, other user responses in the interaction of library digital services, namely OPAC service users, were searching collections with computer tracing facilities. (Informant 6), who stated:

"When I entered the library to find books, I was confused about how. I asked the officer just now. They responded that they showed me this computer (pointed to the computer opac). Still trying to understand the procedure for using opac, I fiddled with the computer finally by myself, without the help of a librarian. I hope the librarian's response to user needs is their priority in daily duties. At least when there are questions, not only show the facilities but are shown how to use the facilities."

From the speakers' statements, researchers' research findings, as described through the voices of immigrant librarians, echo the challenges faced in adapting to digital services and technologies within the library setting. Their hesitancy in confidently explaining procedures to users and deferring such responsibilities to younger librarians reflects a potential generational gap in digital literacy. This observation aligns with the Diffusion of Innovation theory, which suggests that individuals adopt new technologies at different rates, often influenced by age and familiarity. The reluctance of some senior librarians to engage with digital services further supports this theory, as they may fall into the category of late adopters who resist change and prioritize traditional practices, focusing on print collection services.

The assessment provided by native digital librarians aligns with the findings and can be contextualized through the lens of Social Cognitive Theory. According to this theory, individuals learn through observation and modeling. The perception that some senior librarians are hesitant to provide information on digital services suggests a need for more modeling for the younger generation, impacting their confidence and motivation to engage with digital technologies. The sentiment that immigrant digital librarians lack understanding and interest in improving their digital competence may also be attributed to the self-efficacy component of Social Cognitive Theory, where individuals gauge their abilities based on the observed actions of others (Wijonarko, 2020).

User responses, particularly in the e-repository and OPAC services, reflect the importance of user-centric approaches in library services, aligning with the User-Centered Design theory. The user's positive experience with a senior librarian in locating hardcopy materials emphasizes the value of traditional knowledge and expertise. At the same time, the desire for more

proactive assistance in utilizing digital facilities underlines the need for librarians to prioritize user needs. It resonates with the idea that the successful design and implementation of digital services should consider the users' abilities, preferences, and overall user experience.

When dialoguing with diffusion theories, social cognitive theories, and user-centered design principles, the study findings provide a nuanced understanding of the challenges and opportunities in the digital transformation of library services. Addressing generational gaps, fostering a culture of continuous learning, and prioritizing user-centric approaches emerge as critical considerations for effectively integrating digital technologies in the library environment.

After presenting the findings and discussing expert perspectives related to the obtained research results, the researcher recommends several directions for future research. The research findings, at the very least, open various discourses as follows:

**Bridging Generational Gaps and Enhancing Library Services.** The study provides a nuanced understanding of the challenges and opportunities in the digital transformation of library services. Addressing generational gaps, fostering continuous learning, and prioritizing user-centric approaches emerge as crucial considerations for effective integration of digital technologies in the library environment. The research advocates for a supportive and collaborative environment, promoting the sharing of valuable skills and instilling motivation among immigrant digital librarians for meaningful contributions to the ongoing development of libraries in the digital era.

**Evolution of Libraries in the Digital Age.** The study traces the evolution of libraries from traditional to digital forms, highlighting the transformative role of immigrant digital librarians in navigating this shift. The discussion emphasizes how digital libraries, with their focus on internet-oriented platforms, have become instrumental in enhancing access speed and efficiency (Koller & Shoham, 1996).

**Challenges Faced by Immigrant Digital Librarians.** The challenges faced by immigrant digital librarians, particularly in digital skills and public speaking, are discussed in detail. The research recognizes the need for ongoing skill development to ensure that librarians possess the necessary competencies to navigate the dynamic digital landscape effectively (Izuagbe et al., 2019).

**Interventions for Skill Development.** Efforts to address communication challenges, especially in public speaking, are a crucial focus of the discussion. The study advocates for targeted interventions, such as training programs and workshops, to enhance the communication skills of librarians. The aim is to equip librarians, especially those from the immigrant digital

generation, with a well-rounded skill set for effective communication in diverse professional contexts.

**Positive Collaboration Between Generations.** The positive interaction between immigrant digital librarians and their digital native counterparts is a key theme in the discussion. The collaborative learning experiences and mutual acknowledgment of strengths contribute to bridging the generational gap in library management. The discussion emphasizes the importance of leveraging the expertise of digital natives and integrating analog and digital information for comprehensive library services.

**The discussion delves into user responses, highlighting the significance of user-centric approaches in library services.** While users appreciate traditional knowledge, challenges in utilizing digital facilities indicate a potential gap in digital literacy. The findings prompt a discussion on the importance of prioritizing user needs and designing digital services that cater to users' abilities and preferences.

**User-Centric Approaches and Digital Literacy Challenges.** The discussion delves into user responses, highlighting the significance of user-centric approaches in library services. While users appreciate traditional knowledge, challenges in utilizing digital facilities indicate a potential gap in digital literacy. The findings prompt a discussion on the importance of prioritizing user needs and designing digital services that cater to users' abilities and preferences.

#### **D. Conclusion**

Misunderstandings between librarians and users in digital service management result in communication barriers. Librarians, especially those referred to as digital immigrants, may face challenges, creating a generational gap in digital literacy. Despite having digital skills, some encounter difficulties in public communication, aligning with the Diffusion of Innovation theory that highlights the influence of age on technology adoption. Assessments from digital native librarians emphasize the need for modeling, influencing the confidence of the younger generation.

Moreover, the perception of a lack of understanding and interest among immigrant librarians aligns with the self-efficacy component of Social Cognitive Theory. User responses emphasize the importance of a user-centered approach in library services. While valuing traditional knowledge, librarians should prioritize user needs and proactively assist in utilizing digital facilities. This study reveals challenges and opportunities in the digital transformation of

library services, emphasizing addressing generational gaps, continuous learning, and prioritizing a user-centered approach.

However, it's essential to acknowledge the limitations of this study. The research focuses on a specific region, South Sulawesi, and may not fully represent the diverse contexts of digital librarianship in other areas. The findings are based on self-reported data, which may introduce bias or limitations in the respondents' ability to articulate their experiences accurately. Additionally, the study primarily examines challenges faced by librarians, and user perspectives could be further explored for a comprehensive understanding.

Despite these limitations, recommendations are crucial for potential improvements. These findings necessitate actions such as specialized public speaking training, initiatives to improve digital literacy, collaborative empowerment across librarian generations, and promoting cultural change within libraries. By implementing these strategies, libraries can become more adaptive and responsive to user needs in the ever-evolving digital landscape.

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