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GLOLIB

**GLOBAL JOURNAL OF LIBRARIES,
INFORMATION, AND BIBLIOGRAPHIC SCIENCES**

**A Quarterly Peer-Reviewed
International Research Journal**



LIBRARIES



INFORMATION



BIBLIOGRAPHIC
SCIENCES



GLOBAL
PERSPECTIVES



RESEARCH &
INNOVATION



ETHICS &
LEADERSHIP

PUBLISHED BY

ETC OR

EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH CENTER
RESEARCH CONSULTANCY SERVICES



#16 Lake View St., Villa Luisa Subdivision,
Sta. Lucia, Sta. Ana, Pampanga
Philippines



Global Journal of Libraries, Information, and Bibliographic Sciences (GLOLIB)

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About the Journal

The **Global Journal of Libraries, Information, and Bibliographic Sciences (GLOLIB)** is a scholarly, open-access, quarterly, peer-reviewed, international print and online research journal dedicated to advancing knowledge, innovation, and professional practice in the fields of libraries, information science, bibliographic sciences, knowledge organization, and related interdisciplinary domains. Published by **ETCOR Educational Research Center Research Consultancy Services**, GLOLIB serves as an international platform for librarians, information professionals, archivists, records managers, faculty members, researchers, policymakers, publishers, and students to disseminate high-quality empirical, theoretical, methodological, and practice-based research that contributes to the continuous development of library and information services in the digital and knowledge-driven era.

Recognizing libraries as dynamic centers of learning, research, innovation, cultural preservation, and community engagement, GLOLIB embraces scholarly works that explore the evolving roles of libraries and information institutions in supporting education, research, governance, healthcare, business, culture, and lifelong learning. The journal acknowledges that the modern information landscape extends beyond traditional librarianship to encompass digital libraries, artificial intelligence, knowledge management, scholarly communication, bibliometrics, open science, research data management, digital preservation, and emerging information technologies that shape the future of global information access.

GLOLIB welcomes contributions from researchers and practitioners working in academic, school, public, special, government, medical, law, corporate, and community libraries, as well as archives, museums, documentation centers, and information organizations worldwide. The journal encourages interdisciplinary collaboration by recognizing that information systems, knowledge infrastructures, and bibliographic organization intersect with education, computer science, artificial intelligence, digital humanities, communication, public administration, health sciences, engineering, business, and the social sciences.



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The journal particularly values studies that provide practical solutions to contemporary challenges faced by libraries and information centers, including digital transformation, information literacy, artificial intelligence integration, equitable access to information, metadata innovation, preservation of documentary heritage, research visibility, scholarly publishing, user experience, and evidence-based library management. Through rigorous peer review and adherence to the highest standards of research integrity, GLOLIB seeks to bridge theory and professional practice while promoting innovation and international collaboration.

As an international scholarly publication, GLOLIB is committed to maintaining excellence in academic publishing through double-blind peer review, responsible research ethics, editorial independence, transparency, and continuous quality improvement. Every accepted article is assigned a Crossref Digital Object Identifier (DOI) and published in both print and electronic formats to ensure long-term accessibility, discoverability, citation, and global scholarly visibility. The journal likewise pursues inclusion in reputable international indexing and abstracting databases while continuously strengthening its editorial standards in accordance with international best practices.

Ultimately, GLOLIB aspires to become one of the world's leading international journals in Library and Information Science by fostering intellectual exchange, advancing professional excellence, supporting evidence-based decision-making, and promoting equitable access to knowledge for the benefit of individuals, institutions, and societies across the globe.

GLOLIB Data

ETCOR Website: [https://etcor.org/storage/Journals/GLOLIB%20V1\(1\).pdf](https://etcor.org/storage/Journals/GLOLIB%20V1(1).pdf)

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<https://tinyurl.com/GLOLIB>

Journal Template:
<https://tinyurl.com/TemplatesGLOLIB>



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Aims and Scope

Aims

The Global Journal of Libraries, Information, and Bibliographic Sciences (GLOLIB) aims to:

1. **Advance scholarly research and professional practice** in libraries, information science, bibliographic sciences, archives, and knowledge management through the publication of high-quality, peer-reviewed international research.
2. **Promote innovation in library and information services** by encouraging evidence-based studies that improve information access, organization, preservation, retrieval, dissemination, and user engagement across diverse library and information environments.
3. **Serve as a global platform for interdisciplinary collaboration** among librarians, information professionals, educators, researchers, archivists, publishers, data specialists, policymakers, and technology developers addressing contemporary information challenges.
4. **Support the digital transformation of libraries and information institutions** through research involving artificial intelligence, digital repositories, metadata standards, information technologies, data analytics, and emerging innovations that improve library operations and knowledge services.
5. **Encourage ethical, inclusive, and sustainable information ecosystems** by publishing research that strengthens information literacy, intellectual freedom, open science, scholarly communication, research integrity, cultural heritage preservation, and equitable access to information worldwide.
6. **Develop future leaders in Library and Information Science** by providing an international venue for undergraduate students, graduate students, doctoral researchers, faculty members, and library practitioners to disseminate original scholarly work that contributes to global knowledge and professional advancement.

Scope

The journal welcomes original research articles, systematic reviews, scoping reviews, bibliometric analyses, meta-analyses, conceptual papers, methodological studies, technical papers, policy analyses, case studies, best practices, action research, and practice-based scholarly works in, but not limited to, the following fields:

Core Library and Information Science

- Library and Information Science
- Librarianship

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- Academic Libraries
- School Libraries
- Public Libraries
- Special Libraries
- Government Libraries
- Medical and Health Sciences Libraries
- Law Libraries
- Corporate Libraries
- Community Libraries
- Children's and Youth Library Services
- Library Instruction and User Education

Information Science and Knowledge Management

- Information Science
- Information Behavior
- Information Retrieval
- Knowledge Management
- Knowledge Organization
- Knowledge Discovery
- Information Architecture
- Knowledge Graphs
- Organizational Knowledge Systems

Bibliographic and Scholarly Communication

- Bibliographic Sciences
- Bibliographic Control
- Cataloging
- Classification
- Metadata Standards
- Authority Control
- Indexing and Abstracting
- Controlled Vocabularies
- Ontologies
- Linked Open Data
- Bibliometrics
- Scientometrics
- Informetrics
- Altmetrics
- Citation Analysis
- Research Impact Assessment
- Scholarly Publishing



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- Open Access Publishing
- Open Science
- Research Visibility

Digital Libraries and Information Technologies

- Digital Libraries
- Institutional Repositories
- Digital Archives
- Library Automation
- Integrated Library Systems
- Discovery Services
- Information Systems
- Library Analytics
- Artificial Intelligence in Libraries
- Machine Learning Applications
- Data Mining
- Big Data in Libraries
- Blockchain Applications
- Internet of Things in Information Services
- Cloud Computing
- Digital Transformation
- Smart Libraries
- Virtual Libraries

Archives, Records, and Preservation

- Archives and Archival Science
- Records Management
- Documentary Heritage
- Digital Preservation
- Conservation
- Cultural Heritage Documentation
- Memory Institutions
- Museum Documentation
- Indigenous Knowledge Preservation

Information Literacy and Society

- Information Literacy
- Digital Literacy
- Media and Information Literacy
- AI Literacy

V



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- Health Information Literacy
- Financial Information Literacy
- Research Literacy
- Lifelong Learning
- Reading Promotion
- Community Information Services

Library Leadership and Management

- Library Administration
- Strategic Management
- Human Resource Management
- Leadership Development
- Organizational Behavior
- Quality Assurance
- Performance Assessment
- Service Quality
- User Experience
- Marketing of Library Services
- Library Advocacy
- Policy Development
- Library Economics
- Project Management

Education and Professional Development

- Library and Information Science Education
- Curriculum Development
- Professional Competencies
- Continuing Professional Development
- Instructional Design for Library Education
- Experiential Learning
- Internship Programs
- Accreditation
- Professional Certification

Ethics, Law, and Governance

- Information Ethics
- Intellectual Freedom
- Privacy and Data Protection
- Copyright
- Intellectual Property



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- Cybersecurity
- Information Policy
- Freedom of Information
- Artificial Intelligence Governance
- Responsible Research Practices

Emerging and Interdisciplinary Studies

- Digital Humanities
- Data Science
- Human-Computer Interaction
- Citizen Science
- Information for Sustainable Development
- Library Services for Persons with Disabilities
- Disaster Information Management
- Crisis Information Services
- Environmental Information Systems
- Health Informatics
- Educational Technology
- Community Development through Libraries
- Global Information Cooperation
- International Librarianship

Publication Frequency and Format

- **Frequency:** Quarterly (Four Issues Per Year)
- **Formats:** Print and Online
- **Review Type:** Double-Blind Peer Review
- **Language:** English (Filipino manuscripts may be considered when appropriate to the subject and readership)
- **Identifiers:**
 - Print ISSN
 - Electronic ISSN
 - Crossref DOI assigned to every published article
- **Access Model:** Open Access
- **Article Processing:** Editorial screening, plagiarism detection, double-blind peer review, language editing, technical editing, layout and production, DOI registration, online publication, and print publication.
- **Publication Ethics:** The journal adheres to internationally accepted standards on publication ethics, research integrity, transparency, editorial independence, and responsible scholarly communication.



Submission Guidelines

Author Guidelines / Instructions to Authors

The **Global Journal of Libraries, Information, and Bibliographic Sciences (GLOLIB)** welcomes original scholarly works that contribute significantly to the advancement of Library and Information Science (LIS), bibliographic sciences, archives, records management, information science, knowledge organization, digital librarianship, and related interdisciplinary fields. Manuscripts submitted to GLOLIB are received with the understanding that they represent original scholarly work that has not been previously published, is not currently under review elsewhere, and has been approved by all listed authors.

Authors are encouraged to submit manuscripts that present theoretical, empirical, methodological, technological, policy-oriented, bibliometric, historical, or practice-based contributions that advance professional knowledge and evidence-based library and information services worldwide.

Submission of Manuscripts

Authors must submit manuscripts through:

Submit Research Article:

<https://tinyurl.com/GLOLIB>

For manuscripts with two or more authors, the **corresponding author** shall submit the manuscript on behalf of all co-authors and assumes responsibility for all communications with the Editorial Office throughout the review and publication process.

For inquiries regarding manuscript submission, editorial policies, or publication matters, authors may contact:

ETCOR Mobile:

0939-202-9035

Email:

embracingthecultureofresearch@gmail.com



Types of Articles Accepted

GLOLIB accepts the following scholarly works:

- Original Research Articles
- Review Articles
- Systematic Reviews
- Scoping Reviews
- Bibliometric Studies
- Scientometric Analyses
- Informetric Studies
- Meta-analyses
- Conceptual Papers
- Policy Analyses
- Technical Papers
- Case Studies
- Best Practices Reports
- Action Research
- Innovation Reports
- Short Communications
- Professional Practice Papers
- Educational Research in Library and Information Science
- Digital Library Development Studies
- Information Technology Applications in Libraries

Funding Disclosure

All authors must disclose every source of financial support, grants, institutional funding, sponsorship, or other forms of assistance received during the conduct of the study.

If no funding was received, the manuscript should explicitly state:

The authors received no external funding for this research.

Transparency regarding funding sources strengthens research integrity and allows readers to appropriately interpret potential influences on the research.



Manuscript Preparation Requirements

Authors are required to strictly follow the official **GLOLIB Manuscript Template**.

Template:

<https://tinyurl.com/TemplatesGLOLIB>

The manuscript should generally be limited to **10–12 pages**, including tables, figures, appendices, acknowledgments, and references. Authors should present only the most essential components of the completed research while maintaining sufficient scholarly depth and methodological rigor.

Failure to follow the prescribed journal format may result in the manuscript being returned prior to editorial evaluation.

Authors Must Ensure Compliance with the Following

1. Academic Significance, Originality, and Contribution

The manuscript must clearly demonstrate its scholarly significance to Library and Information Science or related disciplines.

The study should:

- address an important professional or scholarly issue;
- identify an existing research gap;
- contribute new knowledge;
- improve professional practice;
- introduce innovative methodologies, systems, technologies, or policies;
- provide practical implications for libraries, information organizations, archives, or knowledge institutions.

Authors should clearly explain:

- Why the study was conducted;
- What gap exists in current literature;
- How the study differs from previous research;
- How the findings contribute to global scholarship and professional practice.



2. Language Quality

The manuscript must demonstrate professional academic writing.

Authors should observe the following:

- Use grammatically correct English.
- Maintain consistency in tense (past tense for completed research).
- Avoid first-person writing ("I," "we," "our") unless justified by methodology.
- Avoid contractions.
- Maintain an objective scientific tone.
- Define specialized terms when necessary.
- Translate local terms unfamiliar to international readers.
- Maintain consistency in terminology throughout the manuscript.

For manuscripts written in Filipino or another language approved by the Editorial Board, an English title, abstract, and keywords must be provided.

3. Abstract

The abstract should accurately summarize the study.

It should include:

- Background
- Objective
- Research Design
- Participants or Data Sources
- Methods
- Major Findings
- Conclusions
- Practical Implications

The abstract should normally contain **200–250 words**.

Immediately after the abstract, provide **five to seven keywords** arranged alphabetically.



4. Introduction

The introduction should establish the scholarly foundation of the study.

It must:

- present global trends;
- discuss regional and local contexts;
- explain the importance of the problem;
- identify existing literature;
- establish research gaps;
- justify the necessity of the present investigation.

Whenever appropriate, authors should prioritize references published within the previous five years while still recognizing seminal works that remain foundational to the discipline.

5. Statement of the Problem, Research Objectives, and Research Questions

These sections should be logically connected.

Statement of the Problem

The statement of the problem should clearly describe the issue or challenge that the study seeks to address.

Example:

Many academic libraries continue to invest in digital repository systems; however, limited evidence exists regarding how repository usability influences faculty participation in institutional scholarly communication initiatives.

Research Objectives

Objectives should be written in infinitive form.

Examples:

- To determine...
- To examine...



- To evaluate...
- To assess...
- To compare...
- To develop...
- To validate...
- To explore...

Research Questions

Research questions should directly correspond to each objective.

Examples:

- What factors influence...
- How effective is...
- What relationships exist...
- What challenges are experienced...

6. Review of Related Literature and Studies

The Review of Related Literature should provide comprehensive scholarly support for the study.

Authors should:

- include current international literature;
- synthesize rather than merely summarize previous studies;
- identify agreements and disagreements among authors;
- explain the relevance of previous studies;
- conclude with a synthesis highlighting the research gap addressed by the present investigation.

Outdated references should be used only when they represent foundational theories or historically significant contributions.



7. Theoretical and/or Conceptual Framework

Every empirical study should be anchored on an appropriate theoretical and/or conceptual framework.

The framework should:

- explain relationships among variables;
- justify research assumptions;
- support methodological decisions;
- guide interpretation of findings.

For applied studies, conceptual frameworks or systems models may likewise be appropriate.

8. Research Methodology

The methodology should be comprehensive, transparent, and replicable.

Subsections should include only relevant information.

Research Design

Clearly identify the research design and explain why it is appropriate.

Examples include:

- Descriptive
- Correlational
- Experimental
- Quasi-experimental
- Mixed Methods
- Phenomenological
- Grounded Theory
- Case Study
- Ethnography
- Bibliometric Analysis
- Scientometric Analysis
- Design Science Research
- Action Research



Participants, Population, Sampling, and Data Sources

Clearly describe:

- study population;
- sample size;
- sampling procedures;
- inclusion and exclusion criteria;
- databases;
- institutional repositories;
- digital collections;
- bibliographic datasets;
- documentary sources;
- archival collections;
- datasets used in bibliometric analyses.

Research Instruments

Indicate whether the instrument was:

- adopted;
- adapted;
- researcher-developed.

Discuss:

- validation procedures;
- pilot testing;
- reliability measures;
- software tools;
- bibliometric software (e.g., VOSviewer, Bibliometrix, CiteSpace) when applicable.

Data Collection

Describe:

- where the data came from;
- collection procedures;
- permissions obtained;



- timelines;
- software platforms utilized.

Data Analysis

Clearly explain:

- statistical procedures;
- qualitative analysis methods;
- bibliometric techniques;
- visualization methods;
- software packages used.

Authors should explain **how** each analysis was applied rather than merely defining statistical techniques.

Ethical Considerations

Discuss:

- ethics approval;
- informed consent;
- confidentiality;
- data privacy;
- copyright compliance;
- institutional permissions;
- responsible use of archival materials;
- compliance with AI-assisted research policies where applicable.

Important Reminders

Authors should avoid:

- mixing unrelated methodological discussions;
- unsupported interpretations;
- excessive quotations;
- poorly labeled tables and figures;



- inconsistent terminology.

For mixed-methods research, quantitative and qualitative components should be discussed separately before explaining how both datasets were integrated.

Authors should consistently use **"researchers"** instead of singular pronouns when multiple authors are involved.

9. Results and Discussion

Results should directly answer the research questions.

Authors should:

- organize findings logically;
- present tables and figures clearly;
- integrate discussion immediately after each result;
- compare findings with previous literature;
- explain theoretical and practical implications.

Merely describing tables without interpretation is discouraged.

10. Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions should:

- directly arise from findings;
- answer the objectives;
- avoid introducing new information.

Recommendations should:

- be feasible;
- evidence-based;
- relevant to libraries, information institutions, researchers, educators, policymakers, or future investigations.

Avoid vague recommendations such as "more studies should be conducted."

Instead, identify specific research directions or practical actions.

Part III

References (APA 7th Edition)

GLOLIB strictly adheres to the **Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA), Seventh Edition**. Authors are responsible for ensuring that all references are complete, accurate, current, and formatted according to APA 7th edition guidelines.

References should reflect scholarly rigor by including the most recent and relevant literature available. Authors are encouraged to prioritize peer-reviewed journal articles, books from reputable academic publishers, government publications, international organization reports, conference proceedings, dissertations, and credible institutional documents.

Authors must carefully review the entire manuscript to ensure consistency between in-text citations and the reference list.

The following requirements shall be strictly observed:

- Every in-text citation must appear in the References section.
- Every reference listed must have been cited within the manuscript.
- No unmatched citations or references shall be permitted.
- References should be arranged alphabetically regardless of publication type.
- Do not separate books, journal articles, reports, websites, and other materials into different categories.
- Use hanging indentation throughout the References section.
- Journal titles and volume numbers must be italicized.
- Article titles should be written in sentence case.
- Journal titles should be written in title case.
- Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs) must be presented in URL format (<https://doi.org/...>).
- Where no DOI exists, provide a stable URL whenever available.
- Retrieval dates should only be included when the source content is designed to change over time.
- Avoid citing "No Date (n.d.)" references unless absolutely unavoidable.
- Authors should prioritize literature published within the last five years, while recognizing seminal works that remain foundational to the discipline.

Authors Must Also Ensure the Following:

- Every research article, policy document, report, thesis, dissertation, conference paper, and online resource cited in the manuscript should include either its DOI or accessible URL whenever available.

- References should accurately reflect the original publication information.
- Authors should verify all hyperlinks before manuscript submission.
- Artificial Intelligence tools used during manuscript preparation should not be cited as primary scholarly references unless the study itself investigates artificial intelligence applications or generated outputs.

Failure to comply with APA 7th edition requirements may delay editorial processing and publication.

11. Acronyms and Abbreviations

All acronyms, abbreviations, and initialisms must be defined upon their first appearance in both the abstract and the main text.

Examples include:

- Library and Information Science (LIS)
- Open Access (OA)
- Artificial Intelligence (AI)
- Integrated Library System (ILS)
- Digital Object Identifier (DOI)
- Open Archives Initiative Protocol for Metadata Harvesting (OAI-PMH)
- Machine Learning (ML)

Authors should avoid excessive use of abbreviations, particularly when terms appear only once or twice in the manuscript.

12. Tables, Figures, and Illustrations

Tables and figures should supplement—not duplicate—the discussion in the manuscript.

Authors should ensure that:

- Tables are editable and not submitted as images.
- Figures are of publication-quality resolution.
- Every table and figure is cited within the text.
- Titles are concise and descriptive.
- Sources are acknowledged where applicable.
- Permissions are secured for copyrighted materials.



Graphs, photographs, screenshots, conceptual models, workflows, and system diagrams should be relevant to the study and contribute to readers' understanding.

13. Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use Disclosure

Authors who utilized Artificial Intelligence (AI)-assisted technologies during manuscript preparation must disclose such use in an appropriate section of the manuscript.

Acceptable uses include:

- language refinement;
- grammar checking;
- translation assistance;
- coding assistance;
- data visualization support.

AI tools must **not** be listed as authors.

Authors remain fully responsible for:

- the originality;
- accuracy;
- integrity;
- interpretation;
- conclusions; and
- ethical compliance

of the submitted manuscript.

Undisclosed or inappropriate AI-generated content may constitute grounds for rejection.

14. Authorship and Contribution Declaration

All listed authors must have made substantial scholarly contributions to the work.

Each author should have participated in one or more of the following:

- Conceptualization
- Literature Review

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- Methodology
- Data Collection
- Data Analysis
- Writing – Original Draft
- Writing – Review and Editing
- Supervision
- Funding Acquisition
- Project Administration

Authors are required to submit a duly accomplished and signed **Authorship and Contribution Declaration Form** together with the manuscript.

Template:

<https://tinyurl.com/TemplatesGLOLIB>

Review Process

Upon successful submission, the corresponding author shall receive an acknowledgment email confirming receipt of the manuscript.

The editorial evaluation consists of several stages designed to ensure scholarly quality, originality, methodological rigor, ethical compliance, and relevance to the aims and scope of GLOLIB.

Stage 1: Initial Editorial Screening

The Associate Editor evaluates whether the manuscript:

- falls within the journal's aims and scope;
- follows the prescribed manuscript template;
- complies with ethical requirements;
- demonstrates acceptable academic quality;
- satisfies submission requirements.

Manuscripts failing to satisfy these preliminary requirements may be returned to the authors for technical revision before peer review.



Stage 2: Similarity Detection

All manuscripts undergo plagiarism screening using appropriate similarity detection software.

The Editorial Office evaluates similarity reports to determine whether overlapping text constitutes acceptable scholarly citation or potential academic misconduct.

Manuscripts exhibiting plagiarism, duplicate publication, or unethical text recycling shall be rejected.

Stage 3: Double-Blind Peer Review

Eligible manuscripts undergo **double-blind peer review** by at least **two independent subject experts**.

Reviewer identities remain confidential throughout the evaluation process.

Likewise, reviewer information is withheld from authors.

Reviewers evaluate manuscripts based on:

- originality;
- scholarly significance;
- methodological rigor;
- technical accuracy;
- organization;
- literature integration;
- clarity of writing;
- ethical compliance;
- practical implications;
- overall contribution to Library and Information Science.

Editorial Decisions

Following peer review, one of the following editorial decisions shall be issued:

- Publish without Revision
- Accept after Minor Revisions
- Accept after Major Revisions



- Resubmit for New Review
- Reject

Split Decisions

If reviewers substantially disagree, the Editor-in-Chief may assign the manuscript to a **third independent reviewer**.

The third review serves as an additional scholarly evaluation to facilitate a fair editorial decision.

Revision Period

Authors are generally given **two weeks** to complete revisions.

Failure to submit revisions within the prescribed period without prior communication may result in withdrawal of the manuscript from editorial processing.

Final Acceptance

The Editor-in-Chief makes the final publication decision after considering:

- reviewer recommendations;
- authors' responses;
- revised manuscript quality;
- editorial standards.

Accepted manuscripts proceed to copyediting, language editing, technical editing, layout, proofreading, DOI registration, and publication.

Publication Policies and Ethics

The **Global Journal of Libraries, Information, and Bibliographic Sciences (GLOLIB)** is committed to the highest standards of scholarly publishing and publication ethics.

The journal follows internationally recognized principles of:

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- research integrity;
- editorial independence;
- fairness;
- transparency;
- accountability;
- responsible scholarly communication.

Authors, reviewers, editors, and editorial staff share responsibility for maintaining these standards.

Research Integrity

Submitted manuscripts must represent original scholarly work.

Authors must ensure that the manuscript:

- has not been previously published;
- is not simultaneously under review elsewhere;
- contains accurate data;
- appropriately cites all sources;
- complies with institutional and national ethical requirements.

Fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, duplicate publication, and image manipulation constitute serious violations of publication ethics.

Changes to Authorship

Requests for authorship modification after manuscript submission shall only be considered under exceptional circumstances.

All authors must provide written consent before any change involving:

- addition of authors;
- removal of authors;
- change in author order.

The Editorial Office reserves the right to reject inappropriate authorship changes.



Copyright Policy

Authors retain copyright to their published articles while granting GLOLIB the non-exclusive right to publish, archive, index, and disseminate the work.

Authors may archive:

- Pre-print versions;
- Accepted manuscripts;
- Publisher's PDF,

subject to the journal's licensing agreement and proper acknowledgment of first publication in GLOLIB.

Conflict of Interest

All authors, reviewers, and editors must disclose any financial, institutional, personal, or professional relationships that could influence the research or editorial process.

Potential conflicts include:

- research funding;
- employment;
- consultancy;
- honoraria;
- stock ownership;
- institutional affiliations.

Transparency promotes public trust in scholarly publishing.

Data Availability

Authors are encouraged to make research data available whenever ethically and legally permissible.

Where restrictions apply, authors should explain the reasons within a Data Availability Statement.



Article Retraction

Articles may be retracted when substantial evidence demonstrates:

- plagiarism;
- duplicate publication;
- fabricated data;
- falsified results;
- unethical research conduct;
- serious methodological errors that invalidate findings.

Retraction notices remain permanently linked to the published article.

Retraction Fee

PHP 6,000

USD 120

Article Withdrawal

Withdrawal requests submitted after completion of peer review, editing, and production processes incur administrative costs.

Withdrawal Fee

PHP 6,000

USD 120

Article Removal

Published articles may only be removed under extraordinary legal, ethical, or public safety circumstances.

Where removal becomes necessary, bibliographic information shall remain permanently accessible as part of the scholarly record whenever legally permissible.



Complaints and Appeals

Authors may appeal editorial decisions by submitting a formal written explanation supported by scholarly justification.

Appeals are reviewed independently by the Editor-in-Chief and, when necessary, by members of the Editorial Board.

The Editor-in-Chief's decision on appeals shall be final.

Additional Information

- **Call for Research Articles:** Open throughout the year (Rolling Submission)
- **Applications for Peer Reviewers:** Open
- **Applications for Editorial Board Membership:** Open
- **Applications for Language Editors:** Open
- **Special Issues:** May be published upon approval of the Editorial Board
- **Publication Charges:** Available upon request
- **Discounts:** Available for ETCOR Research Consultants, accredited reviewers, institutional partners, and approved collaborators
- **Indexing and Abstracting:** The journal actively pursues inclusion in reputable international indexing and abstracting databases and institutional repositories.
- **Digital Preservation:** Published articles are archived through the journal's digital repository to ensure long-term accessibility and preservation.



Editor's Note (Maiden Issue)

Global Journal of Libraries, Information, and Bibliographic Sciences (GLOLIB)

It is with profound honor and great enthusiasm that we present the inaugural issue of the **Global Journal of Libraries, Information, and Bibliographic Sciences (GLOLIB)**. This maiden publication marks another significant milestone in the continuing commitment of **ETCOR Educational Research Center Research Consultancy Services** to promote scholarly excellence, ethical publishing, and international research collaboration. As our organization expands its portfolio of peer-reviewed international journals, GLOLIB stands as a dedicated platform that recognizes the indispensable role of libraries, information institutions, archives, and bibliographic systems in advancing education, research, innovation, cultural preservation, and sustainable societal development.

Throughout history, libraries have served as gateways to knowledge and civilization. They have preserved humanity's intellectual heritage, safeguarded cultural memory, and empowered generations through equitable access to information. In today's increasingly interconnected digital society, however, the role of libraries has expanded far beyond the traditional stewardship of books and printed collections. Modern libraries have become dynamic knowledge centers that support scientific discovery, lifelong learning, digital inclusion, community engagement, open scholarship, and evidence-based decision-making across virtually every discipline.

The rapid advancement of information technologies has fundamentally transformed the ways knowledge is created, organized, disseminated, accessed, and preserved. Artificial intelligence, machine learning, digital repositories, cloud computing, linked data, research analytics, and open science initiatives are reshaping library services and redefining the competencies expected of library and information professionals. These developments present both remarkable opportunities and significant challenges, requiring continuous scholarly inquiry to ensure that information institutions remain relevant, innovative, ethical, and responsive to the evolving needs of society.

The **Global Journal of Libraries, Information, and Bibliographic Sciences (GLOLIB)** was established in response to these transformations. The journal recognizes that Library and Information Science is no longer confined to conventional librarianship but has become an interdisciplinary field that intersects with information science, knowledge management, data analytics, archives, digital humanities, education, computer science, communication, public administration, health sciences, business, and numerous other disciplines. By embracing this multidisciplinary perspective, GLOLIB seeks to become a venue where innovative ideas converge and where scholarly evidence informs professional practice, institutional development, and public policy.



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One of the defining strengths of GLOLIB is its commitment to bridging research and professional practice. While theoretical contributions remain essential to disciplinary advancement, the journal equally values studies that provide practical solutions to real-world challenges encountered by libraries and information organizations. Whether addressing user-centered service design, digital preservation strategies, metadata innovation, information literacy programs, artificial intelligence applications, bibliometric evaluation, research visibility, knowledge organization, or scholarly communication, the journal encourages research that contributes tangible benefits to practitioners, institutions, and communities.

GLOLIB likewise recognizes that libraries are fundamental partners in achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Libraries contribute significantly to quality education, reduced inequalities, gender equality, innovation, strong institutions, cultural preservation, environmental sustainability, and informed citizenship. Through access to reliable information, libraries empower individuals and communities to make informed decisions, participate meaningfully in democratic processes, preserve local heritage, and promote lifelong learning. The journal therefore welcomes research that demonstrates how library and information services contribute to sustainable development at local, national, regional, and global levels.

The Editorial Board also acknowledges the increasing importance of bibliographic sciences in the contemporary research ecosystem. Bibliographic organization, metadata standards, indexing, citation analysis, scientometrics, informetrics, and research analytics have become indispensable tools for measuring scholarly productivity, improving research discoverability, and supporting evidence-based policy formulation. As scholarly publishing continues to evolve through digital technologies and open-access initiatives, bibliographic sciences provide the foundation for ensuring that research outputs remain accessible, interoperable, discoverable, and preserved for future generations.

GLOLIB embraces technological innovation while remaining steadfast in its commitment to research integrity and publication ethics. Every manuscript undergoes rigorous editorial screening, plagiarism detection, and double-blind peer review to ensure originality, methodological rigor, scholarly significance, and ethical compliance. The journal is equally committed to transparency, fairness, editorial independence, and continuous quality improvement. These principles reflect our unwavering belief that credible scholarly communication depends upon trust, accountability, and responsible stewardship of knowledge.

As an international journal, GLOLIB welcomes submissions from scholars, librarians, archivists, information scientists, educators, policymakers, publishers, students, and practitioners across all regions of the world. We believe that diversity of perspectives enriches scholarly dialogue and strengthens the collective advancement of the profession. Comparative studies, international collaborations, cross-cultural investigations, and interdisciplinary research are particularly encouraged, as they contribute to a broader understanding of how information institutions respond to shared global challenges while addressing unique local contexts.

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The journal also seeks to nurture emerging researchers alongside established scholars. Many librarians and information professionals engage in innovative projects, service improvements, technological implementations, and community-based initiatives that deserve scholarly recognition. GLOLIB provides a rigorous yet supportive venue where such contributions can be documented, evaluated, disseminated, and shared with the international research community. By encouraging practitioner-led research, the journal hopes to strengthen the culture of evidence-based librarianship and continuous professional learning.

As scholarly publishing itself continues to evolve, GLOLIB remains committed to adopting internationally recognized standards in editorial management, digital publishing, indexing, and research dissemination. Every published article is assigned a Crossref Digital Object Identifier (DOI), ensuring persistent identification, citation, and discoverability. The journal likewise pursues inclusion in reputable indexing and abstracting databases to maximize the visibility, accessibility, and global impact of the scholarly works entrusted to its pages.

The success of this maiden issue would not have been possible without the dedication of our authors, peer reviewers, associate editors, language editors, technical editors, and members of the Editorial Board. Their expertise, professionalism, and commitment to academic excellence have laid a strong foundation for what we envision as a respected international journal serving the Library and Information Science community for many years to come. We also express our sincere appreciation to the institutions, organizations, and professional associations that continue to support research, innovation, and scholarly publishing within the discipline.

As Editor-in-Chief, I warmly invite researchers, practitioners, educators, students, and information professionals from around the world to make GLOLIB their preferred venue for disseminating high-quality scholarly work. Together, we can cultivate a vibrant international community committed to advancing libraries, information systems, bibliographic sciences, and knowledge management for the benefit of present and future generations.

On behalf of the entire Editorial Board, I extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who contributed to this inaugural issue. May the **Global Journal of Libraries, Information, and Bibliographic Sciences (GLOLIB)** continue to inspire intellectual curiosity, foster scholarly collaboration, uphold the highest standards of research integrity, and contribute meaningfully to the advancement of knowledge, information accessibility, and lifelong learning across the world.

Richard D. Sanchez, LPT, PhD

Editor-in-Chief

Global Journal of Libraries, Information, and Bibliographic Sciences (GLOLIB)

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professionals whose expertise strengthens the journal's commitment to scholarly excellence, ethical publishing, and global collaboration. Advisory Board members provide strategic guidance on editorial direction, emerging research priorities, publication quality, and international visibility while promoting multidisciplinary cooperation within Library and Information Science and related disciplines.

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Still keeping the light on: A phenomenological study on the hopes and dreams of veteran librarians in the digital era

Carla L. Serrano, Josephine F. Cruz, Richard D. Sanchez, Julie Mae Moreno

Abstract

Aim: Libraries have long served as enduring institutions that preserve knowledge, promote literacy, and strengthen communities. However, the rapid expansion of digital technologies, artificial intelligence, electronic resources, and online information platforms has significantly altered information-seeking behaviors, resulting in declining physical library visits and reduced reliance on printed materials. Amid these transformations, veteran librarians continue to demonstrate resilience and unwavering commitment to the profession. This phenomenological study explored the lived experiences, hopes, dreams, and aspirations of veteran librarians regarding the future of libraries and librarianship in the digital era.

Methodology: Using purposive sampling, twelve licensed librarians with at least twenty years of professional experience from public, academic, and school libraries participated in in-depth semi-structured interviews. Data were analyzed using Moustakas' transcendental phenomenological approach through horizontalization, clustering of meanings, textural descriptions, structural descriptions, and synthesis of meanings and essences.

Results: Six essential themes emerged: embracing change without abandoning tradition; preserving libraries as spaces of human connection; inspiring lifelong readers despite digital distractions; empowering communities through evolving library services; nurturing the next generation of librarians; and leaving a legacy beyond books. Participants acknowledged the challenges brought about by declining patronage of physical collections but remained optimistic that libraries would continue evolving into dynamic centers of learning, digital inclusion, cultural preservation, and community engagement.

Conclusion: The essence of the phenomenon revealed that veteran librarians perceive their profession not merely as managing collections but as sustaining hope, preserving humanity's collective memory, and empowering future generations through equitable access to knowledge. The study underscores the continuing relevance of librarianship in an increasingly digital society and recommends strategic investments in professional development, technological innovation, and community-centered library programs.

Keywords: *digital transformation, hopes and dreams, libraries, librarianship, lived experiences, phenomenology*

INTRODUCTION

For centuries, libraries have served as trusted institutions that safeguard knowledge, preserve cultural heritage, and promote lifelong learning. Regardless of political, technological, or societal changes, libraries have remained symbols of intellectual freedom, democratic access to information, and educational advancement (Adigun et al., 2024). Librarians, often regarded as custodians of knowledge, have continuously adapted to changing information environments while remaining committed to serving diverse communities.

The twenty-first century has introduced unprecedented transformations in the way information is created, organized, accessed, and shared. Digital technologies, cloud computing, artificial intelligence, electronic books, social media, and mobile devices have fundamentally changed human information behavior. Individuals increasingly rely on online search engines, digital repositories, and artificial intelligence-powered platforms to obtain information that was once primarily available through printed books and physical libraries (Alzahrani et al., 2025). Consequently, many libraries around the world have reported declining circulation of printed materials and reduced in-person library visits.

These developments have generated both opportunities and challenges for library professionals. While digital technologies have expanded access to information and enabled innovative library services, they have likewise raised questions regarding the continuing relevance of traditional libraries and the evolving identity of librarianship. Public discourse occasionally portrays libraries as institutions losing significance in the digital age, despite growing evidence that libraries continue to provide essential educational, technological, cultural, and community services.

Amid these transformations, veteran librarians occupy a unique position. Having witnessed the transition from card catalogs to integrated library systems, from printed indexes to digital databases, and from physical collections to hybrid information environments, they possess rich professional experiences that can illuminate how libraries have evolved over time. More importantly, their hopes and aspirations offer valuable insights into the future direction of librarianship as an evolving profession.

Existing research has extensively examined digital transformation, information technologies, user behavior, library management, and service innovation. Comparatively fewer qualitative studies have explored the deeply personal aspirations, professional dreams, and enduring motivations of experienced librarians who have devoted decades of service despite rapid technological disruption. Understanding these lived experiences contributes not only to the scholarly literature on librarianship but also to leadership development, succession planning, professional identity formation, and policy development within library and information institutions.

As libraries continue redefining their roles in increasingly digital societies, listening to the voices of seasoned librarians becomes both timely and necessary. Their experiences provide important lessons regarding resilience, adaptability, professional purpose, and hope that may guide future generations of library professionals.

Guided by this perspective, the present study explored the lived experiences, hopes, and dreams of veteran librarians regarding the future of libraries and librarianship in the digital era. By capturing their stories, reflections, and aspirations, the study seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of the enduring human values that continue to define librarianship despite continuous technological transformation.

Review of Related Literature

Libraries in Transition

Libraries have continuously evolved from repositories of printed knowledge into multifaceted centers that integrate physical collections, digital resources, collaborative learning spaces, and community engagement programs. Contemporary libraries increasingly provide access to electronic databases, institutional repositories, makerspaces, multimedia laboratories, and digital literacy initiatives. This transformation reflects broader societal changes driven by technological innovation and expanding information ecosystems.

Despite declining circulation of printed materials in many institutions, libraries remain significant public spaces that promote equitable access to information, lifelong learning, and civic participation (Ryan et al., 2023). Modern libraries have expanded their missions beyond collection management by emphasizing user-centered services, digital inclusion, and community partnerships.

The Changing Role of Librarians

The responsibilities of librarians have evolved substantially during the past three decades. Contemporary librarians perform diverse roles as educators, technology facilitators, digital curators, research consultants, instructional partners, information literacy advocates, and community leaders. These expanding responsibilities require continuous professional development and adaptability in response to emerging technologies.

Veteran librarians often possess unique institutional knowledge accumulated through decades of professional practice. Their experiences provide valuable perspectives on organizational change, leadership, and professional resilience that may not be fully captured through quantitative investigations.

Professional Identity in Librarianship

Professional identity refers to the values, beliefs, competencies, and sense of purpose that individuals associate with their profession. Studies suggest that librarians generally derive professional fulfillment from facilitating access to information, supporting education, preserving cultural heritage, and contributing to community development. For experienced librarians, professional identity frequently extends beyond occupational responsibilities and becomes deeply intertwined with personal values, lifelong service, and commitment to intellectual freedom.

Digital Transformation and Library Sustainability

Digital transformation has introduced numerous innovations including cloud-based integrated library systems, artificial intelligence applications, institutional repositories, digital archives, and virtual reference services. While these developments have expanded service opportunities, they have likewise created concerns regarding technological readiness, workforce competencies, funding sustainability, and the future relevance of physical library spaces.

Rather than replacing traditional libraries, digital transformation increasingly encourages hybrid service models that integrate technological innovation with personalized human services.

Hope, Purpose, and Legacy in Helping Professions

Hope has been described as an individual's positive expectation toward achieving meaningful future goals despite uncertainty or adversity. Within helping professions such as education, healthcare, and librarianship, hope often manifests through commitment to service, professional resilience, mentoring, and aspirations for future generations.

Legacy similarly represents the enduring impact professionals wish to leave within their organizations and communities. Veteran librarians frequently define success not through collections managed or technologies implemented but through the lives influenced, readers inspired, and communities empowered.

Synthesis of Literature

The reviewed literature demonstrates that libraries continue undergoing profound technological transformation while maintaining their essential educational and social functions. Existing studies have extensively investigated digital technologies, information behavior, library services, and organizational management. However, there remains limited qualitative research exploring the lived experiences, hopes, dreams, and enduring aspirations of veteran librarians who have personally experienced the evolution of libraries across several decades.

Addressing this gap, the present phenomenological inquiry seeks to illuminate the shared meanings that experienced librarians attach to their profession, thereby contributing a human-centered perspective to contemporary Library and Information Science scholarship.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on **Viktor Frankl's Logotherapy (1963)** and **Snyder's Hope Theory (1994)**, which collectively provide a meaningful lens for understanding how veteran librarians derive purpose from their profession and envision its future despite the challenges brought about by rapid technological transformation.

Frankl's Logotherapy

Viktor Frankl proposed that the primary motivational force in human life is the search for meaning (Nweke, 2022). According to Logotherapy, individuals remain resilient even in the face of adversity when they discover purpose in their experiences, work, relationships, and contributions to others. Rather than being discouraged by external circumstances, individuals who possess a strong sense of purpose continue to find fulfillment through meaningful service.

The theory is particularly relevant to librarianship because many veteran librarians have devoted decades to preserving knowledge, promoting literacy, and serving their communities. Although declining physical library visits and increasing reliance on digital information have transformed traditional library services, experienced librarians continue to perceive their profession as a meaningful vocation rather than merely an occupation. Their commitment extends beyond managing collections toward empowering learners, preserving cultural memory, and fostering informed citizenship.

Through the lens of Logotherapy, the study seeks to understand how veteran librarians sustain their professional purpose and continue finding meaning in their work despite evolving information environments.

Snyder's Hope Theory

Hope Theory, developed by Snyder, explains hope as a cognitive process consisting of three interconnected components: goals, pathways, and agency (Schornick et al., 2023). Goals represent desired future outcomes, pathways refer to perceived strategies for achieving those goals, and agency reflects the motivation to pursue them despite challenges.

The theory suggests that hopeful individuals remain optimistic because they continually identify alternative pathways toward achieving meaningful aspirations even when obstacles arise.

Applied to the present study, Hope Theory provides an appropriate framework for understanding how veteran librarians continue envisioning a positive future for libraries despite technological disruption, changing reading behaviors, and declining utilization of printed resources. Their hopes are reflected in aspirations for stronger community engagement, digitally inclusive services, professional sustainability, and the continued relevance of librarianship.

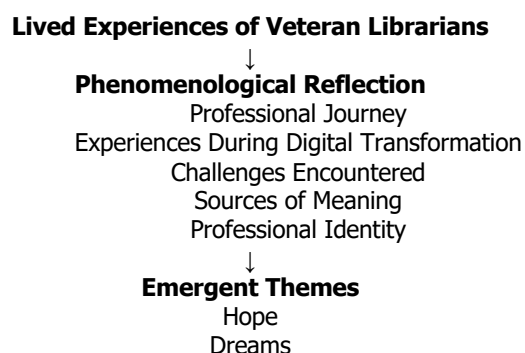
Together, Logotherapy and Hope Theory explain not only why seasoned librarians remain committed to their profession but also how they continue envisioning meaningful futures for libraries amid continuous societal transformation.

Conceptual Framework

The present investigation views the lived experiences of veteran librarians as the central phenomenon from which deeper meanings regarding hope, aspirations, resilience, and professional identity emerge.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework of the Study



Resilience
Commitment
Adaptation
Legacy



Essence of the Phenomenon

The framework illustrates that the participants' lived experiences serve as the foundation for phenomenological reflection. Through thematic analysis, the essential meanings of their experiences emerge, ultimately leading to a richer understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

Statement of the Problem

The rapid advancement of digital technologies has transformed the ways individuals access, utilize, and share information. Electronic books, online databases, artificial intelligence applications, social media, and mobile technologies have significantly altered traditional patterns of library use, resulting in declining physical visits to many libraries and reduced dependence on printed collections.

While considerable research has examined digital transformation, technological innovation, library management, and information-seeking behavior, comparatively little attention has been devoted to understanding the lived experiences of veteran librarians who have witnessed these transformations throughout their professional careers.

Despite changing information environments, experienced librarians continue serving their communities with dedication and optimism. Their perspectives regarding the future of libraries, professional identity, personal aspirations, and enduring commitment remain insufficiently explored.

Understanding these lived experiences may provide valuable insights into the evolving role of libraries, the resilience of library professionals, and the future direction of librarianship in an increasingly digital society.

Accordingly, this study seeks to explore the hopes, dreams, and lived experiences of veteran librarians regarding the future of libraries and librarianship.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to explore and describe the lived experiences, hopes, dreams, and future aspirations of veteran librarians regarding the continuing relevance of libraries and the library profession in the digital era.

Specifically, the study seeks to understand how experienced librarians make meaning of their professional journeys, perceive ongoing technological transformation, and envision the future of librarianship.

Central Research Question

What are the lived experiences, hopes, and dreams of veteran librarians regarding the future of libraries and librarianship in the digital era?

Sub-Questions

The study sought to answer the following questions:

1. How do veteran librarians describe their professional journey throughout the years?
2. What significant experiences have shaped their perspectives regarding librarianship?
3. How do they perceive the changing roles of libraries in the digital era?
4. What challenges have they encountered as technology transformed library services?
5. What hopes do they have for the future of libraries?
6. What dreams do they hold for future librarians and future generations of library users?
7. What meanings do they attach to their lifelong service as librarians?
8. What is the essence of their shared lived experiences?

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study may contribute to various stakeholders.

Veteran Librarians. The study provides an opportunity for experienced librarians to reflect upon their professional journeys, articulate their aspirations, and preserve their experiences for future generations.

Beginning Librarians. The narratives generated from this study may inspire newly licensed librarians by providing valuable insights regarding resilience, professional purpose, ethical service, and lifelong commitment to learning.

Library Administrators. The findings may assist administrators in developing succession planning initiatives, mentorship programs, leadership development strategies, and organizational policies that recognize the contributions of experienced librarians.

Library and Information Science Educators. The study may enrich library education by incorporating authentic professional narratives into teaching, thereby strengthening students' understanding of the evolving nature of librarianship.

Professional Organizations. Library associations may utilize the findings in designing continuing professional development programs that address leadership, professional identity, digital transformation, and workforce sustainability.

Researchers. The study contributes to the growing body of qualitative literature in Library and Information Science by providing an in-depth understanding of the human dimensions of librarianship during periods of technological change.

Society. Ultimately, the study reinforces public appreciation for libraries and librarians as enduring institutions that continue promoting equitable access to information, lifelong learning, cultural preservation, and community development despite rapid technological advancement.

Scope and Delimitations

This study focused exclusively on the lived experiences, hopes, dreams, and future aspirations of veteran librarians working in public, academic, and school libraries within selected provinces in the Philippines.

Participants consisted of licensed librarians who possess at least twenty years of professional experience and are either currently employed or recently retired from active library service.

The study is limited to understanding participants' subjective experiences through phenomenological inquiry and does not seek to measure organizational performance, user satisfaction, technological effectiveness, or library utilization using quantitative methods.

The findings represent the shared meanings constructed from participants' narratives and are therefore not intended for statistical generalization. Rather, they provide rich descriptions that may enhance understanding of the phenomenon and inform future research, professional practice, and library policy.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative transcendental phenomenological research design following the philosophical tradition of Edmund Husserl and the methodological procedures articulated by Moustakas (1994). Phenomenology seeks to understand and describe the essence of a phenomenon through the lived experiences of individuals who have directly encountered it.

The transcendental phenomenological approach was deemed appropriate because the study aimed to explore how veteran librarians make meaning of their professional journeys, aspirations, hopes, and dreams amid the profound technological changes that have transformed libraries and information services. Rather than examining organizational performance or measuring attitudes quantitatively, the study focused on understanding participants' personal reflections, emotions, meanings, and interpretations of their experiences throughout decades of professional service.

Through careful listening, reflection, and phenomenological reduction, the researchers sought to describe the common essence of being a veteran librarian in an increasingly digital society.

Research Locale

The study was conducted among selected public, academic, and school libraries located in Central Luzon, Philippines. The region was selected because it represents diverse library environments serving various educational institutions, local government units, and communities.

Libraries included in the study were chosen because they have continuously operated for many years and employ experienced librarians who have witnessed the transition from predominantly print-based services to digitally integrated library operations.

To preserve participant anonymity, the identities of participating libraries were withheld.

Participants of the Study

The participants consisted of twelve (12) veteran licensed librarians who possessed extensive professional experience in library and information services.

Participants represented various library sectors, including:

- Public libraries
- Academic libraries
- School libraries
- Government libraries

The researchers determined that twelve participants were sufficient because data saturation was achieved, meaning no substantially new themes emerged from succeeding interviews.

Inclusion Criteria

Participants were selected based on the following criteria:

- Must be a licensed librarian.
- Must have at least twenty (20) years of professional library experience.
- Must have experienced both traditional and digital library environments.
- Must currently be employed or have retired within the last five years.
- Must be willing to participate voluntarily.
- Must provide informed consent.

Sampling Technique

The study employed purposive sampling.

Purposive sampling enabled the researchers to intentionally identify participants who possessed rich professional experiences directly relevant to the phenomenon under investigation. Veteran librarians were selected because they had firsthand experience navigating the significant transitions that occurred in librarianship over the past several decades.

As interviews progressed, participants consistently shared similar experiences regarding technological change, professional identity, and aspirations for the future, indicating the achievement of data saturation.

Research Instrument

The primary research instrument was a semi-structured interview guide developed by the researchers based on the study's objectives, theoretical framework, and review of literature.

The interview guide consisted of three major sections.

Part I. Professional Background

Questions explored participants'

- educational background,
- years of professional service,
- type of library,
- leadership positions held, and
- major professional milestones.

Part II. Lived Experiences

Questions focused on participants' experiences regarding

- changing library services,
- digital transformation,
- declining physical library visits,
- changing information behaviors,
- professional challenges,
- memorable experiences.

Sample questions included:

"Can you describe how libraries have changed throughout your career?"

"What moments made you most proud to be a librarian?"

"How have you experienced the transition from printed collections to digital resources?"

Part III. Hopes and Dreams

Questions explored participants'

- hopes for libraries,
- aspirations for future librarians,
- personal legacy,
- professional advice,
- vision of libraries in the next twenty years.

Examples included:

"What do you hope libraries will become in the future?"

"What legacy would you like to leave to future librarians?"

The interview guide underwent expert review by three senior Library and Information Science professors to establish content validity. Suggestions regarding wording, sequencing, and probing questions were incorporated before data collection.

Data Collection Procedure

Prior to data collection, approval was obtained from the concerned library administrators.

Potential participants received invitation letters explaining the study's objectives, procedures, voluntary nature of participation, and ethical safeguards.

Individual interviews were scheduled according to participants' preferred dates and venues.

Each interview lasted approximately 60–90 minutes and was conducted either face-to-face or through secure online video conferencing platforms, depending on participants' preferences and availability.

With participants' permission, interviews were audio-recorded to ensure accuracy.

Field notes were simultaneously documented to capture:

- non-verbal behaviors,
- emotional expressions,
- pauses,
- contextual observations,
- researchers' initial reflections.

Following each interview, recordings were transcribed verbatim.

Participants were subsequently provided copies of their transcripts for verification through member checking, allowing them to clarify statements or provide additional information when necessary.

Data Analysis

The collected narratives were analyzed using Moustakas' (1994) transcendental phenomenological analysis, consisting of the following procedures:

1. Epoche (Bracketing)

The researchers consciously set aside personal assumptions and prior experiences regarding librarianship to approach participants' narratives with openness.

2. Horizontalization

Every significant statement from each transcript was treated with equal value during the initial stages of analysis.

3. Clustering of Meanings

Significant statements sharing similar meanings were grouped into meaningful units.

4. Textural Description

The researchers described what participants experienced throughout their professional journeys.

5. Structural Description

The researchers interpreted how participants experienced the phenomenon by examining contextual factors, organizational changes, and personal meanings.

6. Essence Synthesis

Finally, textural and structural descriptions were integrated to construct the universal essence of the phenomenon describing the hopes and dreams of veteran librarians in the digital era.

Qualitative coding was performed manually and supported through iterative reading, constant comparison, memo writing, and thematic analysis.

Trustworthiness of the Study

The rigor of the study was established using Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria for qualitative research.

Credibility

Credibility was strengthened through prolonged engagement with participants, member checking, and triangulation using interview transcripts and field notes.

Transferability

Rich, detailed descriptions of participants and contexts enable readers to determine the applicability of findings to similar settings.

Dependability

A comprehensive audit trail documenting methodological decisions, coding procedures, and theme development was maintained throughout the investigation.

Confirmability

Researcher reflexive journals and peer debriefing minimized researcher bias while ensuring that interpretations were grounded in participants' narratives.

Ethical Considerations

The study strictly adhered to accepted ethical principles governing qualitative research involving human participants.

Prior to participation, all participants received detailed explanations regarding the study's objectives, procedures, potential benefits, and possible risks.

Written informed consent was secured before conducting interviews.

Participants were informed that:

- participation was entirely voluntary;
- they could refuse to answer any question;
- they could withdraw from the study at any stage without consequence.

To maintain confidentiality, pseudonyms (e.g., Participant 1, Participant 2) replaced participants' names throughout the study.

Audio recordings, transcripts, and electronic files were stored in password-protected devices accessible only to the researchers.

All interview data were used exclusively for academic purposes.

Throughout the study, the researchers upheld the principles of respect for persons, beneficence, non-maleficence, confidentiality, and justice.

Researcher Reflexivity

Recognizing that phenomenological inquiry requires awareness of researcher influence, the researchers continuously practiced reflexivity throughout the investigation. Personal experiences, professional assumptions, and prior beliefs regarding librarianship were documented through reflexive journaling before, during, and after each interview.

By consciously engaging in bracketing, the researchers sought to minimize preconceived interpretations and remain attentive to the meanings expressed by participants themselves. Regular discussions among the research team and peer debriefing further enhanced interpretive transparency and ensured that emerging themes reflected the participants' voices rather than the researchers' expectations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences, hopes, and dreams of veteran librarians regarding the future of libraries and librarianship in the digital era. Analysis of the interview transcripts using Moustakas' (1994) transcendental phenomenological approach resulted in six essential themes. These themes collectively describe how veteran librarians continue to find meaning in their profession despite the changing landscape of information access, declining physical library visits, and the increasing dominance of digital technologies.

The participants' narratives revealed not only the challenges they have encountered throughout decades of professional service but also their enduring optimism, resilience, and commitment to preserving the core values of librarianship.

Theme 1

"Libraries May Change, But Their Mission Remains the Same"

One of the strongest themes emerging from the interviews was the participants' belief that although libraries continuously evolve, their fundamental mission remains unchanged. Veteran librarians consistently emphasized that libraries have never been defined solely by books or buildings but by their commitment to connecting people with trustworthy information, fostering learning, and supporting community development.

Several participants reflected on the dramatic transition from manual cataloging systems to automated library management systems, electronic databases, and digital repositories. Despite these technological advancements, they believed that the heart of librarianship continues to revolve around serving people.

One participant shared:

"When I started working, everything was handwritten. We typed catalog cards one by one. Today, everything is online. But one thing has never changed—we are still helping people find knowledge." (Participant 3)

Another participant remarked:

"People think libraries are disappearing because books are becoming digital. I disagree. Libraries are simply changing their form, but not their purpose." (Participant 7)

Participants explained that while technologies evolve rapidly, the societal need for reliable information, critical thinking, and lifelong learning remains constant. Rather than viewing digital transformation as a threat, they regarded it as another chapter in the continuing evolution of libraries.

These narratives demonstrate that veteran librarians distinguish between the physical form of libraries and their enduring educational mission. Their reflections suggest that libraries continue serving as institutions that promote

informed citizenship, cultural preservation, and equitable access to knowledge regardless of technological advancements.

Theme 2

"Technology Is Not Our Enemy; It Is Our New Partner"

Participants acknowledged that digital technologies have fundamentally altered library operations. Nevertheless, instead of expressing fear toward technological innovation, they generally perceived technology as an opportunity to expand library services and reach broader audiences.

Most participants described learning computerized cataloging systems, online databases, institutional repositories, and electronic resources during the latter stages of their careers. While adapting required considerable effort, they viewed continuous learning as an essential professional responsibility.

Participant 5 reflected:

"At first, computers intimidated many of us. But eventually we realized that technology allows us to serve more people than we ever could before."

Participant 10 added:

"Artificial intelligence may answer questions quickly, but it cannot replace the human ability to guide learners toward understanding information responsibly."

Participants consistently emphasized that technological competence should complement—not replace—the ethical, educational, and interpersonal dimensions of librarianship.

Several participants believed that future librarians should become equally proficient in digital technologies while maintaining compassion, professional integrity, and commitment to public service.

These findings suggest that veteran librarians perceive technological innovation as an opportunity for professional growth rather than institutional decline.

Theme 3

"The Greatest Challenge Is Not Technology but Changing Reading Habits"

Although participants accepted technological progress, many expressed concern regarding changing reading behaviors among younger generations.

Several participants observed declining circulation of printed books and fewer students visiting physical libraries except when academic requirements demanded it.

Participant 1 shared:

"Many students now believe that the internet contains everything. Unfortunately, they sometimes forget that not everything online is accurate."

Participant 8 reflected:

"What saddens me is not that books are becoming digital. It is when people stop reading deeply and simply scroll from one piece of information to another."

Participants emphasized that libraries now face a broader challenge of promoting critical thinking, information evaluation, and sustained reading habits rather than merely encouraging physical library visits.

Many believed that librarians must become advocates of information literacy by teaching individuals how to identify credible sources, evaluate misinformation, and responsibly utilize emerging technologies.

Their narratives illustrate that the future role of librarians extends beyond managing collections toward developing informed, reflective, and responsible information users.

Theme 4

"Libraries Are Places Where Communities Continue to Find Hope"

Participants consistently described libraries as much more than repositories of books. Instead, they viewed libraries as welcoming community spaces where individuals discover opportunities for learning, personal growth, social interaction, and empowerment.

Participant 6 explained:

"A child may enter the library because of an assignment but leave with a dream for the future."

Participant 11 reflected:

"Libraries become safe spaces. Some visitors simply need someone willing to guide them patiently."

Participants described numerous experiences assisting children, senior citizens, job seekers, researchers, and community members who relied on library services for education, employment, and lifelong learning.

These experiences reinforced their belief that libraries continue playing indispensable roles in strengthening communities despite declining dependence on printed materials.

Several participants envisioned future libraries incorporating makerspaces, digital laboratories, community learning hubs, and collaborative innovation spaces while preserving their welcoming atmosphere.

The findings indicate that participants perceive libraries as evolving social institutions that continue promoting inclusion, education, and community resilience.

Theme 5

"Our Greatest Legacy Is Not the Books We Organized but the Lives We Influenced"

Perhaps the most emotional narratives emerged when participants discussed the legacy they hoped to leave behind.

Nearly every participant stated that their proudest accomplishments were not technological projects, library buildings, or collection sizes but the individuals whose lives had been positively influenced through library services.

Participant 2 shared:

"Years from now, no one will remember how many books I cataloged. But perhaps someone will remember that I encouraged them to love reading."

Participant 9 reflected emotionally:

"Our shelves will eventually change. Technology will continue evolving. But kindness, patience, and service—those are the things people never forget."

Many participants spoke passionately about mentoring younger librarians, encouraging professional growth, and preserving the ethical foundations of librarianship.

Participants consistently defined success through human impact rather than institutional accomplishments.

This finding highlights the deeply service-oriented identity that continues characterizing experienced library professionals.

Theme 6

"Still Keeping the Light On"

The final and overarching theme captured the participants' collective optimism regarding the future of libraries. Despite acknowledging numerous challenges—including declining physical library visits, reduced circulation of printed collections, technological disruption, limited funding, and changing public expectations—participants consistently expressed hope rather than pessimism.

Participant 4 summarized this perspective beautifully:

"As long as there are people searching for truth, libraries will always have a purpose."

Participant 12 concluded:

"We are still keeping the light on—not simply inside our buildings, but inside every learner who discovers the joy of knowledge."

Participants envisioned libraries becoming more technologically advanced while remaining deeply committed to educational equity, cultural preservation, lifelong learning, and community engagement.

Rather than viewing themselves as guardians of printed books alone, participants increasingly described themselves as guardians of knowledge, wisdom, and hope.

Composite Textural Description (What the Participants Experienced)

The veteran librarians described careers marked by profound transformation. They experienced the evolution from handwritten accession records and card catalogs to integrated library systems, online databases, digital repositories, and artificial intelligence-assisted information services. Alongside these technological shifts, they observed declining physical library visits, changing reading habits, and evolving user expectations. Despite these changes, they continued to derive fulfillment from assisting learners, supporting researchers, promoting literacy, mentoring colleagues, and fostering community engagement. Their experiences reflected adaptability, perseverance, and an unwavering commitment to service.

Composite Structural Description (How the Participants Experienced the Phenomenon)

Participants experienced these changes through a process of continuous adaptation anchored in professional purpose. Rather than interpreting technological advancement as a threat, they viewed it as an opportunity to expand access to knowledge while preserving the human-centered values of librarianship. Their hopes were sustained by meaningful interactions with library users, the opportunity to mentor future professionals, and the enduring belief that libraries remain essential institutions for education, culture, and democratic access to information. Their experiences were shaped by resilience, lifelong learning, and a deep sense of vocational calling.

Essence of the Phenomenon

The essence of the lived experiences of veteran librarians is characterized by enduring hope grounded in purpose. Although the physical manifestations of libraries continue to evolve, participants perceived librarianship as an enduring commitment to empowering individuals through knowledge, fostering lifelong learning, preserving cultural memory, and strengthening communities. For these veteran librarians, "keeping the light on" symbolizes far more than

maintaining library buildings; it represents sustaining curiosity, wisdom, compassion, and equitable access to information for present and future generations. Their collective narratives affirm that while technologies may redefine how information is delivered, they cannot diminish the fundamental human mission of librarianship—to illuminate minds, nurture learning, and inspire hope.

Conclusions

The findings of this phenomenological study illuminate the enduring spirit of veteran librarians who have remained steadfast in their commitment to serving communities despite the rapid transformation of the information landscape. While participants acknowledged the declining use of printed materials, reduced physical library visits, and the widespread adoption of digital technologies, these developments were not perceived as signals of the decline of librarianship. Instead, they were viewed as opportunities for professional growth, service innovation, and institutional transformation.

The participants consistently demonstrated that the true essence of librarianship extends beyond the management of books and information resources. Their narratives revealed that librarianship is fundamentally a profession rooted in service, education, mentorship, ethical stewardship of knowledge, and community empowerment. Technological advancements have changed the tools through which librarians deliver services, but they have not diminished the profession's central mission of connecting people with reliable information and fostering lifelong learning.

The study likewise revealed that veteran librarians continue to derive meaning from witnessing the positive impact of their work on learners, educators, researchers, and communities. Their aspirations emphasize the importance of preserving libraries as inclusive spaces where knowledge, culture, innovation, and human connection converge. Rather than longing for a return to the past, participants envisioned libraries that successfully integrate emerging technologies while maintaining the human values that have long defined the profession.

The hopes expressed by the participants extend beyond their individual careers. They aspire for future librarians to become adaptive, technologically competent, compassionate, ethical, and committed to serving increasingly diverse communities. They also envision libraries as dynamic centers for digital literacy, cultural preservation, collaborative learning, innovation, and civic engagement.

Ultimately, the lived experiences of veteran librarians reveal that while the formats through which information is delivered will continue to evolve, the purpose of librarianship remains remarkably constant. Libraries may become increasingly digital, yet their enduring role as institutions that cultivate knowledge, inspire curiosity, preserve collective memory, and empower communities continues to illuminate society. In this sense, veteran librarians truly remain "keepers of the light," sustaining hope, wisdom, and learning for future generations.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are offered:

For Library Administrators

Library administrators may continue strengthening the digital transformation of libraries while preserving their human-centered mission. Investments in emerging technologies should be accompanied by programs that promote personalized user services, community engagement, and inclusive learning environments where patrons continue to experience meaningful interactions with librarians.

For Veteran Librarians

Experienced librarians may be encouraged to actively participate in mentorship initiatives that allow them to share their professional knowledge, ethical principles, institutional memory, and practical experiences with beginning librarians. Their accumulated wisdom represents an invaluable professional resource that should be preserved and transmitted across generations.

For Beginning Librarians

Newly licensed librarians may continuously develop competencies in digital technologies, artificial intelligence, information literacy instruction, research support, and community outreach while maintaining the profession's enduring values of integrity, intellectual freedom, compassion, and public service.

For Library and Information Science Schools

Higher education institutions offering Library and Information Science programs may integrate the lived experiences of veteran librarians into their curricula through case studies, oral history projects, mentorship programs, and experiential learning opportunities that strengthen students' appreciation of the profession's evolving identity.

For Professional Organizations

Professional associations may design continuing professional development programs that balance technological competencies with leadership development, emotional resilience, mentoring, advocacy, ethical decision-making, and community-centered librarianship.

For Government Agencies and Policymakers

Government agencies responsible for library development may continue supporting sustainable investments in library infrastructure, digital technologies, internet connectivity, professional development, and innovative community programs that enhance equitable access to information, particularly in underserved communities.

For Communities

Community members may be encouraged to recognize libraries as dynamic learning institutions that extend far beyond traditional book lending. Active participation in library programs, literacy initiatives, digital learning activities, and cultural events can strengthen the continuing relevance of libraries within society.

For Future Researchers

Future qualitative investigations may explore the lived experiences of early-career librarians, digital librarians, archivists, academic library leaders, and community information professionals across different cultural and institutional contexts. Comparative studies involving multiple countries may likewise provide deeper insights into how librarianship continues to evolve in response to technological innovation, artificial intelligence, and changing information behaviors.

Implications of the Study

The findings of this study carry several important implications for the future of Library and Information Science.

First, the study demonstrates that the continuing relevance of libraries depends not solely on technological advancement but also on their ability to preserve meaningful human relationships. While digital resources have expanded access to information, participants emphasized that empathy, guidance, mentorship, and professional judgment remain uniquely human dimensions that cannot be fully replaced by technology.

Second, the narratives suggest that the identity of librarianship is shifting from collection-centered service toward people-centered knowledge facilitation. This transformation requires librarians to assume expanded roles as educators, digital literacy advocates, technology facilitators, research partners, cultural stewards, and community leaders.

Third, the findings reinforce the importance of preserving the institutional memory embodied by veteran librarians. Their experiences offer practical lessons regarding organizational resilience, professional ethics, leadership, and adaptation that can inform future library development initiatives and succession planning.

Fourth, the study highlights the need for continuous professional learning. As technologies continue evolving, librarians must cultivate lifelong learning mindsets while simultaneously preserving the profession's foundational values of intellectual freedom, equitable access to information, lifelong education, and public service.

Finally, the study suggests that the future success of libraries will depend upon successfully balancing innovation with tradition. Rather than replacing the historical functions of libraries, digital transformation provides opportunities to expand their educational, cultural, and social contributions through hybrid service models that integrate technological advancement with meaningful human engagement.

Proposed Model

The "KEEPING THE LIGHT ON" FRAMEWORK FOR SUSTAINABLE LIBRARIANSHIP IN THE DIGITAL ERA

Based on the lived experiences of the participants, this study proposes the **Keeping the Light On Framework**, a conceptual model that illustrates how veteran librarians sustain the relevance of libraries amid technological transformation.

Foundation: Enduring Professional Values

The framework begins with the enduring values that define librarianship:

- Commitment to lifelong learning
- Ethical stewardship of knowledge
- Service to communities
- Intellectual freedom
- Equity of information access
- Cultural preservation

These values remain constant regardless of technological change.

Transformational Processes

Grounded in these values, librarians engage in continuous processes of:

- technological adaptation;
- professional development;
- community engagement;
- mentorship of future librarians;
- promotion of information and digital literacy; and

- innovation in library services.

These processes enable libraries to respond proactively to evolving user needs.

Desired Outcomes

Through these transformational processes, libraries become:

- inclusive community learning hubs;
- trusted centers of reliable information;
- digitally empowered knowledge institutions;
- spaces for lifelong learning and innovation;
- catalysts for community resilience; and
- enduring symbols of hope and democratic access to knowledge.

Ultimate Essence

At the center of the framework lies the study's central insight:

Libraries endure because their true purpose has never been limited to preserving books; rather, they exist to illuminate minds, empower communities, preserve humanity's collective memory, and inspire hope across generations.

This framework underscores that while library collections, technologies, and service models may continue to evolve, the profession's enduring mission remains constant: to keep the light of knowledge, learning, and human connection burning for all.

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Digital competency, artificial intelligence readiness, and professional development needs of academic librarians in private higher education institutions in Central Luzon, Philippines: Basis for a regional library capability enhancement framework

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Abstract

Aim: The rapid integration of digital technologies and artificial intelligence (AI) into higher education has transformed the roles and responsibilities of academic librarians. Beyond traditional collection management and reference services, librarians are increasingly expected to support digital scholarship, research data management, AI-assisted information retrieval, institutional repositories, and scholarly communication. This study aimed to determine the digital competency, artificial intelligence readiness, and professional development needs of academic librarians employed in private higher education institutions (PHEIs) in Central Luzon, Philippines. The findings served as the basis for developing a Regional Library Capability Enhancement Framework that supports sustainable professional development for academic librarians.

Methodology: The study employed an explanatory sequential mixed-methods research design. Quantitative data were gathered from 148 licensed librarians working in 37 private higher education institutions across Central Luzon using a researcher-developed questionnaire validated by experts in Library and Information Science. Descriptive statistics, weighted mean, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression analyses were utilized to analyze quantitative data. Subsequently, semi-structured interviews with 15 library directors and senior librarians were conducted to explain the quantitative findings through thematic analysis.

Results: The study revealed that librarians demonstrated high competency in digital library services, electronic resource management, and information literacy instruction but reported only moderate competency in artificial intelligence applications, research data management, bibliometric analysis, and digital preservation. AI readiness was generally moderate, with organizational support, technological infrastructure, and access to professional development significantly influencing readiness levels. Professional development priorities included generative AI applications in libraries, digital scholarship, research analytics, metadata management, cybersecurity, and institutional repository administration. Significant positive relationships were found between digital competency, organizational support, and AI readiness.

Conclusion: Academic librarians in private higher education institutions have successfully adapted to digital library environments but require continuous upskilling to meet emerging demands associated with artificial intelligence and advanced research support services. Sustainable institutional investment in technology, continuing professional development, and collaborative regional initiatives can strengthen librarians' competencies and improve library service delivery. The proposed Regional Library Capability Enhancement Framework offers a practical roadmap for supporting digital transformation among academic libraries in Central Luzon.

Keywords: *academic librarians, artificial intelligence, digital competency, professional development, higher education libraries, digital libraries, library innovation*

INTRODUCTION

The twenty-first century has ushered libraries into an era characterized by unprecedented technological advancement, digital transformation, and rapidly evolving information ecosystems (Meesad & Mingkhan, 2024). Academic libraries are no longer viewed merely as repositories of printed collections but have become dynamic knowledge hubs that facilitate digital learning, research collaboration, scholarly communication, and open access information services. These developments have fundamentally redefined the professional responsibilities of librarians, requiring them to acquire competencies that extend well beyond traditional cataloging, circulation, and reference services.

The emergence of artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, cloud computing, research analytics, digital repositories, and big data technologies has significantly influenced the management and dissemination of information resources. AI-powered discovery systems, intelligent search engines, automated cataloging, virtual reference assistants, plagiarism detection tools, citation analysis platforms, and research data management systems are increasingly becoming integral components of academic library services. Consequently, librarians are expected not only to understand these technologies but also to integrate them ethically and effectively into library operations.

Higher education institutions have simultaneously undergone substantial changes in response to digital education, flexible learning modalities, international research collaboration, and open science initiatives. Academic libraries play a critical role in supporting these institutional transformations by providing access to scholarly resources, promoting information literacy, assisting faculty research, managing institutional repositories, and facilitating digital scholarship. As the expectations placed upon academic libraries continue to expand, librarians must continuously develop new competencies that align with emerging institutional priorities and global trends.

Professional development remains one of the most effective strategies for enabling librarians to respond to these changes. Continuous learning allows library professionals to remain current with technological innovations, international standards, metadata practices, copyright regulations, digital preservation strategies, and research support services (Onunka et al., 2023). Organizations such as the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), the American Library Association (ALA), and the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) consistently emphasize lifelong professional learning as an essential component of effective librarianship.

In the Philippine context, academic libraries have likewise experienced accelerated digital transformation following the widespread adoption of flexible learning environments, online information services, and electronic resource management systems. Private higher education institutions have invested significantly in digital library infrastructures, subscription databases, institutional repositories, and virtual library services. Nevertheless, disparities remain in technological resources, institutional support, funding allocation, and opportunities for professional development among academic libraries across different regions.

Central Luzon hosts numerous private higher education institutions serving thousands of students and faculty members from diverse academic disciplines. While these institutions continue to modernize their library services, relatively few empirical studies have comprehensively examined the digital competencies and artificial intelligence readiness of academic librarians working within the region. Existing studies have largely focused on continuing professional development, library management practices, or service quality rather than librarians' preparedness for AI-enabled library environments.

Moreover, recent international literature highlights growing concerns regarding librarians' readiness to utilize artificial intelligence responsibly, manage research data, support digital scholarship, implement bibliometric services, and address ethical issues surrounding AI-assisted information retrieval. Without adequate professional development, librarians may encounter challenges in maximizing the potential benefits of these technologies while ensuring responsible and equitable information services.

Recognizing these developments, the present study investigates the digital competency, artificial intelligence readiness, and professional development needs of academic librarians employed in private higher education institutions in Central Luzon. Unlike previous studies that primarily examined continuing professional development within public universities, this investigation focuses specifically on digital transformation in private higher education institutions and the emerging competencies required in AI-supported academic libraries. The findings are expected to contribute to evidence-based policy formulation, institutional planning, and regional professional development initiatives that strengthen library services and promote sustainable digital transformation across academic libraries in Central Luzon.

Review of Related Literature and Studies

Digital Transformation of Academic Libraries

Academic libraries have experienced profound transformation over the last decade due to rapid technological innovations and the increasing digitization of scholarly communication. Modern libraries are no longer confined to housing printed collections but have become integrated learning and research environments that provide access to digital resources, institutional repositories, electronic databases, research analytics, and virtual reference services (Oyedokun, 2025). The emergence of cloud computing, artificial intelligence (AI), big data, and open science has further expanded the scope of library services, requiring librarians to adopt new competencies that support digital scholarship and information management.

Recent studies indicate that digital transformation has altered librarians' professional responsibilities from collection custodianship to knowledge facilitation, research partnership, instructional support, and technology integration. Academic librarians now assist faculty and students in systematic reviews, bibliometric analysis, research data management, scholarly publishing, and information literacy, demonstrating the profession's evolving nature in the digital age.

Digital Competency among Academic Librarians

Digital competency refers to the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and ethical practices necessary for effectively utilizing digital technologies in professional settings (Sánchez-Canut et al., 2023). Within academic libraries, digital competency encompasses electronic resource management, integrated library systems, metadata creation, digital preservation, database searching, virtual reference services, information literacy instruction, and research support.

Several international studies have reported that librarians generally demonstrate high competence in traditional digital library operations but exhibit varying levels of proficiency in emerging technologies such as AI applications, machine learning, research analytics, and digital scholarship support. Institutional investment in technology, leadership support, and continuing professional development have consistently been identified as important determinants of digital competency.

Artificial Intelligence in Library Services

Artificial intelligence has increasingly influenced library operations by enhancing information retrieval, cataloging, recommendation systems, metadata generation, plagiarism detection, virtual reference services, and predictive analytics. AI-powered discovery tools enable users to retrieve information more efficiently while allowing librarians to automate repetitive technical tasks.

Despite these advantages, AI adoption presents several challenges, including ethical concerns, algorithmic bias, copyright issues, privacy protection, and workforce readiness. Consequently, librarians require specialized training that enables them to evaluate AI-generated information critically and implement AI technologies responsibly within academic environments.

Continuing Professional Development of Librarians

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) remains an essential mechanism for ensuring that librarians maintain current competencies in response to changing technological and professional demands (Moonasar, 2024). Professional organizations worldwide encourage librarians to participate regularly in seminars, workshops, certification programs, online courses, conferences, and collaborative learning activities.

Research consistently demonstrates that librarians who engage actively in CPD exhibit higher confidence in adopting emerging technologies, delivering innovative services, and supporting institutional research initiatives. However, barriers such as limited funding, workload, inadequate institutional support, and unequal access to training opportunities continue to affect CPD participation.

Organizational Support and Digital Readiness

Organizational support significantly influences successful digital transformation within academic libraries. Administrative commitment, strategic planning, technology infrastructure, financial investment, and leadership all contribute to librarians' readiness to implement innovative services.

Libraries that cultivate learning-oriented organizational cultures encourage experimentation, interdisciplinary collaboration, and continuous improvement. Such environments enable librarians to adapt more effectively to technological changes while maintaining high-quality user-centered services.

Synthesis of the Literature

The reviewed literature demonstrates that academic librarians worldwide are experiencing substantial changes in professional practice due to digital transformation and artificial intelligence. While previous studies have examined digital competencies, AI applications, and professional development independently, relatively few investigations have integrated these variables within the context of private higher education institutions in Central Luzon.

Moreover, existing Philippine studies have primarily emphasized continuing professional development or service quality, with limited attention given to librarians' readiness for AI-enabled library environments. This gap highlights the need for empirical investigations that examine how digital competency, organizational support, and AI readiness collectively influence professional development priorities. The present study addresses this gap by exploring these interconnected dimensions and proposing a Regional Library Capability Enhancement Framework that supports sustainable digital transformation among academic libraries.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) proposed by Davis (1989), which explains how perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use influence individuals' acceptance and utilization of emerging technologies (Schorr, 2023). Within the context of academic libraries, librarians' willingness to adopt AI-supported services is influenced by their perceptions regarding the usefulness of these technologies in improving library operations and service delivery.

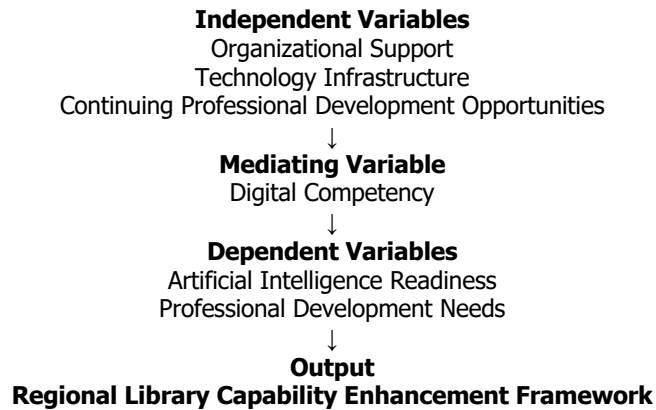
The study is likewise supported by Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations Theory (2003), which explains how innovations are adopted within organizations over time (Menzli et al., 2022). According to the theory, adoption depends upon innovation characteristics, communication channels, organizational context, and individual readiness. Libraries that provide supportive leadership, technological infrastructure, and continuous professional development are more likely to facilitate successful adoption of AI and digital innovations.

The Competency Theory of Professional Development also serves as a guiding framework. This theory emphasizes that professional competence develops through continuous learning, reflective practice, and institutional support (Phuong & Duong, 2022). Librarians continuously enhance their competencies through education, training, experience, and collaboration, enabling them to respond effectively to evolving professional demands.

Collectively, these theoretical perspectives explain how organizational support influences digital competency, which in turn affects librarians' readiness to adopt AI technologies and identify professional development needs.

Conceptual Framework

The study proposes that organizational support contributes to the development of librarians' digital competencies, which subsequently influence their readiness to adopt artificial intelligence technologies. These variables collectively shape librarians' continuing professional development priorities and inform the development of a Regional Library Capability Enhancement Framework.



Statement of the Problem

The rapid digital transformation of academic libraries has expanded librarians' responsibilities beyond traditional information services. As artificial intelligence and emerging digital technologies become increasingly integrated into library operations, librarians are expected to develop new competencies that support research, teaching, scholarly communication, digital preservation, and information management. Despite substantial investments in library technologies, differences remain in organizational support, digital competency, and readiness to adopt AI-enabled services among academic libraries.

Within private higher education institutions in Central Luzon, limited empirical evidence exists regarding librarians' preparedness for these technological changes. Understanding librarians' digital competencies, AI readiness, and professional development priorities is therefore necessary to inform evidence-based institutional planning and sustainable capacity-building initiatives.

Research Objective

The study aimed to determine the digital competency, artificial intelligence readiness, and professional development needs of academic librarians in private higher education institutions in Central Luzon as the basis for developing a Regional Library Capability Enhancement Framework.

Specifically, the study sought to:

1. describe the respondents' professional profile;
2. determine their level of digital competency;
3. assess their readiness to adopt artificial intelligence technologies;
4. examine the level of organizational support for digital transformation;
5. identify their continuing professional development needs;
6. determine the significant relationships among organizational support, digital competency, and AI readiness; and
7. propose a Regional Library Capability Enhancement Framework.

Research Questions

1. What is the professional profile of the respondents?
2. What is the level of digital competency of academic librarians?
3. What is the level of artificial intelligence readiness?
4. To what extent do institutions provide organizational support for digital transformation?
5. What are the priority professional development needs of academic librarians?
6. Is there a significant relationship between organizational support and digital competency?
7. Is there a significant relationship between digital competency and AI readiness?
8. What Regional Library Capability Enhancement Framework may be proposed based on the findings?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This sample study employed an explanatory sequential mixed-methods research design, consisting of two complementary phases. The first phase involved the collection and analysis of quantitative data to determine the levels of digital competency, artificial intelligence (AI) readiness, organizational support, and continuing professional development (CPD) needs among academic librarians. The second phase utilized qualitative interviews to provide deeper insights into the quantitative findings, particularly regarding librarians' experiences, perceived challenges, and recommendations for strengthening digital transformation initiatives in academic libraries.

The explanatory sequential design was selected because it enabled the researcher to explain and elaborate on the statistical findings through qualitative evidence. Quantitative results established the overall trends, while qualitative data enriched the interpretation by providing contextual explanations from experienced library professionals.

Locale of the Study

For instructional purposes, this sample study was situated in private higher education institutions (PHEIs) located in Central Luzon, Philippines. Central Luzon was selected because it is home to numerous colleges and universities that have invested in digital library systems, electronic resources, institutional repositories, and technology-enhanced library services.

The participating institutions represented various disciplines, including comprehensive universities, specialized colleges, faith-based institutions, and private higher education institutions offering undergraduate and graduate programs. These institutions have implemented varying degrees of digital transformation, making the region an appropriate context for examining librarians' competencies and readiness for AI-enabled library services.

Participants of the Study

The target participants consisted of licensed academic librarians employed in private higher education institutions in Central Luzon. Eligible participants were those who:

- held permanent or contractual librarian positions;
- possessed at least one year of professional library experience;
- were directly involved in library operations, information services, or digital resource management; and
- voluntarily agreed to participate in the study.

Library directors, chief librarians, reference librarians, technical services librarians, digital services librarians, and electronic resources librarians were considered eligible respondents because of their active involvement in implementing technology-supported library services.

Sampling Technique

The sample study employed stratified random sampling to ensure adequate representation of librarians from various private higher education institutions throughout the region.

Initially, participating institutions were grouped according to province. Thereafter, librarians from each institution were proportionately selected using simple random sampling. This sampling procedure promoted balanced representation while minimizing selection bias.

Research Instrument

Data were gathered using a **researcher-developed questionnaire** consisting of five major sections.

Part I. Professional Profile

This section obtained demographic and professional information, including:

- age
- sex
- highest educational attainment
- years of professional experience
- present position
- type of institution
- library automation system used
- attendance in professional development activities
- previous AI-related training

Part II. Digital Competency Scale

This section measured respondents' competencies across the following dimensions:

- Digital Information Services
- Electronic Resource Management

- Information Literacy Instruction
- Digital Preservation
- Metadata Management
- Research Support Services
- Digital Scholarship
- Research Data Management

Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from:

Scale Interpretation

5	Very High
4	High
3	Moderate
2	Low
1	Very Low

Part III. Artificial Intelligence Readiness Scale

This section assessed librarians' readiness to adopt AI technologies in terms of:

- Knowledge of AI
- Skills in AI Applications
- Ethical Awareness
- Organizational Preparedness
- Technological Confidence
- Willingness to Adopt AI

Part IV. Organizational Support Scale

This section measured institutional support covering:

- Administrative Commitment
- Budget Allocation
- Technology Infrastructure
- Leadership Support
- Technical Assistance
- Professional Development Opportunities

Part V. Continuing Professional Development Needs

Respondents rated the degree of need for training in the following areas:

- Generative AI Applications
- AI-Assisted Cataloging
- Bibliometric Analysis
- Research Analytics
- Digital Preservation
- Metadata Standards
- Research Data Management
- Cybersecurity
- Digital Scholarship
- Institutional Repository Management
- Open Science
- Copyright and Intellectual Property
- Data Visualization
- Digital Curation

An open-ended question allowed respondents to recommend additional professional development programs.

Instrument Validation

The questionnaire was subjected to content validation by specialists in Library and Information Science, educational technology, research methodology, and measurement and evaluation.

The validators evaluated the instrument according to:

- relevance
 - clarity
 - comprehensiveness
 - organization
 - appropriateness of language
- Suggestions provided by the experts were incorporated before pilot administration.

Pilot Testing

Prior to the actual implementation, the questionnaire was pilot-tested among academic librarians from institutions outside the intended study area.

The pilot study was conducted to determine:

- clarity of instructions;
 - readability of questionnaire items;
 - average completion time;
 - consistency of responses; and
 - appropriateness of the response scale.
- Necessary revisions were incorporated following the pilot administration.

Data Gathering Procedure

Permission to conduct the study was first obtained from the administrators of participating higher education institutions.

After institutional approval, the researcher coordinated with library directors regarding the administration schedule of the questionnaire.

Participants were informed about:

- the objectives of the study;
- voluntary participation;
- confidentiality of responses;
- anonymity;
- estimated completion time; and
- their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without penalty.

Questionnaires were administered either personally or through secure online survey platforms.

Following the quantitative phase, selected participants were invited for semi-structured interviews to provide additional explanations regarding the survey findings.

Interview sessions were conducted with participants' permission and were audio-recorded solely for transcription and thematic analysis.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were encoded, organized, and analyzed using appropriate statistical software.

The following statistical tools were employed:

Research Objective	Statistical Tool
Respondents' Profile	Frequency and Percentage
Digital Competency	Weighted Mean and Standard Deviation
AI Readiness	Weighted Mean and Standard Deviation
Organizational Support	Weighted Mean and Standard Deviation
Professional Development Needs	Weighted Mean and Ranking
Relationship among Variables	Pearson Product-Moment Correlation
Predictors of AI Readiness	Multiple Linear Regression

Qualitative interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis, involving:

1. familiarization with the transcripts;
2. initial coding;
3. generation of themes;
4. review of themes;
5. definition of themes; and
6. integration of qualitative findings with quantitative results.

Ethical Considerations

The conduct of the study adhered to accepted ethical standards in educational and social science research. The following ethical principles were observed:

- Participation was entirely voluntary.
- Written informed consent was obtained from all participants.
- Respondents' identities remained anonymous.
- Personal information was treated with strict confidentiality.
- Data were used exclusively for academic and research purposes.
- Participants were allowed to withdraw from the study at any time without adverse consequences.
- Electronic data were stored securely using password-protected devices accessible only to the researcher.
- Interview recordings were permanently deleted after transcription and completion of the study.

Furthermore, the study observed the principles of respect for persons, beneficence, non-maleficence, and justice throughout the research process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondents' Professional Profile

Table 1

Professional Profile of the Respondents

Profile Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Male	36	24.3
	Female	112	75.7
Age	21–30 years	32	21.6
	31–40 years	49	33.1
	41–50 years	39	26.4
	51 years and above	28	18.9
Highest Educational Attainment	Bachelor's Degree	29	19.6
	Master's Degree	91	61.5
	Doctorate Degree	28	18.9
Years of Experience	1–5 years	38	25.7
	6–10 years	44	29.7
	11–15 years	35	23.6
	More than 15 years	31	21.0

The data indicate that the majority of academic librarians were female and possessed graduate-level education, with most holding master's degrees in Library and Information Science or related disciplines. Many respondents had accumulated more than five years of professional experience, suggesting that they possessed adequate exposure to contemporary academic library operations. The presence of experienced librarians provides opportunities for mentoring younger professionals and supporting organizational innovation initiatives.

Digital Competency of Academic Librarians

Table 2

Level of Digital Competency

Indicator	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Electronic Resource Management	4.46	0.48	Very High
Information Literacy Instruction	4.42	0.50	Very High
Digital Library Systems	4.35	0.56	Very High
Online Reference Services	4.28	0.59	High

Indicator	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Institutional Repository Management	4.12	0.61	High
Metadata Management	3.89	0.68	High
Digital Preservation	3.74	0.71	High
Research Data Management	3.45	0.77	Moderate
Bibliometric Analysis	3.39	0.82	Moderate
Artificial Intelligence Applications	3.18	0.84	Moderate
Overall Mean = 3.93 (High)			

The findings suggest that librarians demonstrated strong competencies in established digital library services such as electronic resource management, information literacy instruction, and digital library administration. These competencies likely reflect the widespread implementation of online databases, integrated library systems, and virtual learning environments across higher education institutions.

Conversely, competencies related to artificial intelligence, bibliometric analysis, and research data management received comparatively lower ratings. These emerging areas require specialized knowledge and technical skills that may not yet be widely incorporated into existing professional development programs. The findings imply a need for targeted capacity-building initiatives focusing on advanced digital scholarship and AI-supported library services.

Artificial Intelligence Readiness

Table 3

Artificial Intelligence Readiness of Academic Librarians

Indicator	Mean	Interpretation
Willingness to Learn AI	4.41	Very High
Positive Attitude Toward AI	4.26	Very High
Awareness of AI Applications	3.87	High
Confidence in Using AI Tools	3.54	High
Ethical Understanding of AI	3.48	Moderate
Practical Skills in AI	3.22	Moderate

Overall Mean = 3.80 (High)

The results indicate that librarians generally exhibited positive attitudes toward artificial intelligence and expressed a strong willingness to learn emerging technologies. However, practical skills and ethical understanding were comparatively less developed. This pattern suggests that while librarians recognize the potential benefits of AI, many require structured training to translate positive attitudes into competent professional practice.

Organizational Support

Table 4

Extent of Organizational Support

Indicator	Mean	Interpretation
Administrative Support	4.18	High
Technology Infrastructure	4.06	High
Leadership Commitment	4.03	High
Internet Connectivity	3.95	High
Professional Development Opportunities	3.71	High
Budget Allocation	3.42	Moderate

Overall Mean = 3.89 (High)

The data suggest that participating institutions generally provided favorable organizational environments for digital transformation. Leadership support and technological infrastructure received relatively high ratings, reflecting institutional commitment to modernizing library services. Budget allocation, however, emerged as the lowest-rated indicator, indicating that financial limitations may affect the sustainability of professional development initiatives and technology acquisition.

Continuing Professional Development Needs

Table 5

Priority Continuing Professional Development Needs

Training Topic	Mean Rank	
Generative AI Applications	4.74	1
Research Data Management	4.69	2
Bibliometric Analysis	4.63	3
Digital Scholarship	4.58	4
AI-Assisted Cataloging	4.53	5
Cybersecurity for Libraries	4.49	6
Metadata Standards	4.45	7
Digital Preservation	4.39	8
Institutional Repository Administration	4.34	9
Open Science	4.26	10

The findings demonstrate that librarians prioritized professional development activities directly associated with emerging technologies. Training related to generative AI, research data management, and bibliometric analysis ranked highest, reflecting the growing demand for research support services in academic libraries. These priorities align with international trends emphasizing librarians' expanded roles in digital scholarship and scholarly communication.

Relationship Between Digital Competency and AI Readiness

Table 6

Correlation Matrix

Variables	Correlation	Interpretation
Digital Competency × AI Readiness	0.68	Moderate Positive Relationship
Organizational Support × AI Readiness	0.59	Moderate Positive Relationship
Organizational Support × Digital Competency	0.63	Moderate Positive Relationship

The relationships suggest that librarians with stronger digital competencies tend to report higher levels of AI readiness. Likewise, supportive organizational environments appear to be associated with greater confidence in adopting emerging technologies. These patterns underscore the importance of institutional investment in professional development and digital infrastructure to facilitate successful technological innovation within academic libraries.

Summary of Major Findings

Based on the data presented:

1. Academic librarians generally possessed graduate-level qualifications and substantial professional experience.
2. Digital competency was high, particularly in traditional digital library operations.
3. AI readiness was generally positive, although practical AI skills required further development.
4. Organizational support was favorable, but budget allocation remained an area for improvement.
5. Professional development priorities centered on AI, research analytics, digital scholarship, and research data management.
6. Positive relationships were observed among organizational support, digital competency, and AI readiness.

Conclusions

Based on the findings presented in this manuscript, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Academic librarians in private higher education institutions possess strong foundational competencies in traditional digital library operations, particularly in electronic resource management, information literacy instruction, and digital library administration. These competencies demonstrate their ability to effectively support teaching, learning, and research within higher education institutions.
2. Although librarians exhibit positive attitudes toward artificial intelligence and demonstrate willingness to adopt emerging technologies, practical competencies in AI applications, research data management, bibliometric analysis, and digital scholarship remain developing areas that require systematic professional enhancement.
3. Organizational support, including administrative commitment, technology infrastructure, and leadership encouragement, plays an important role in strengthening librarians' digital competencies and readiness to implement AI-supported library services.
4. Continuing professional development remains an indispensable strategy for preparing librarians to address the rapidly changing technological landscape of academic libraries. Specialized training programs focusing on artificial intelligence, research analytics, cybersecurity, and digital preservation are necessary to ensure that librarians remain relevant in modern information environments.
5. The integration of organizational support, digital competency development, and targeted professional learning initiatives provides a practical foundation for sustainable digital transformation in academic libraries.
6. The proposed **Regional Library Capability Enhancement Framework** offers a structured approach for strengthening librarians' competencies and supporting the strategic digital transformation of academic libraries within the region.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions, the following recommendations are offered:

For Academic Librarians

Academic librarians may actively participate in continuing professional development activities related to artificial intelligence, digital scholarship, research data management, bibliometric analysis, and emerging information technologies to continuously enhance their professional competencies.

For Higher Education Institutions

Institutional administrators may strengthen support for library modernization by allocating adequate financial resources, investing in digital infrastructure, expanding access to emerging technologies, and encouraging librarians' participation in professional development programs.

For Library Administrators

Library directors may formulate competency-based staff development plans aligned with institutional priorities and global trends in librarianship. Internal mentoring programs, collaborative learning communities, and technology-focused training initiatives may also be established.

For Professional Library Organizations

Professional associations may develop specialized certification programs and advanced training courses focusing on artificial intelligence, digital transformation, open science, research analytics, digital preservation, and ethical technology use in libraries.

For Government Agencies

Government agencies responsible for higher education and library development may strengthen policy support and funding opportunities for digital library initiatives and continuing professional development among library professionals.

For Future Researchers

Future researchers may replicate similar investigations in public universities, special libraries, school libraries, public libraries, and archives. Additional variables such as digital leadership, organizational culture, innovation capability, technology acceptance, and user satisfaction may likewise be explored.

Proposed Regional Library Capability Enhancement Framework

Rationale

The continuous advancement of digital technologies and artificial intelligence requires academic librarians to acquire competencies beyond traditional library functions. Sustainable professional development requires coordinated institutional support, technology investment, competency-based training, and continuous assessment.

The proposed Regional Library Capability Enhancement Framework serves as a guide for academic libraries seeking to strengthen librarians' digital competencies while promoting innovation, lifelong learning, and technology-enabled library services.

Goal

To strengthen the digital competency, artificial intelligence readiness, and professional excellence of academic librarians in private higher education institutions through sustainable competency-based professional development initiatives.

Framework Components

Pillar 1

Digital Competency Development

Focus Areas

- Digital Library Systems
- Electronic Resources
- Metadata Standards
- Digital Preservation
- Institutional Repositories
- Information Literacy

Expected Outcome

Digitally competent librarians capable of managing modern academic library services.

Pillar 2

Artificial Intelligence Readiness

Focus Areas

- Generative AI
- AI-Assisted Cataloging
- Intelligent Search Systems
- Prompt Engineering
- AI Ethics
- AI Governance

Expected Outcome

Responsible and confident utilization of artificial intelligence in library operations.

Pillar 3

Research and Scholarly Communication

Focus Areas

- Bibliometric Analysis
- Citation Databases
- Research Data Management
- Open Science
- Academic Publishing
- ORCID
- DOI
- Institutional Repository Management

Expected Outcome

Libraries functioning as active research support centers.

Pillar 4

Organizational Support

Focus Areas

- Leadership Development
- Technology Investment
- Infrastructure Improvement
- Policy Development
- Budget Allocation
- Strategic Planning

Expected Outcome

Institutional environments supportive of innovation and continuous learning.

Pillar 5

Continuing Professional Development

Focus Areas

- Regional Seminars

- International Conferences
- Online Certifications
- Peer Learning
- Professional Networking
- Micro-Credentials

Expected Outcome

Sustainable lifelong professional learning among academic librarians.

Pillar 6

Assessment and Continuous Improvement

Focus Areas

- Competency Assessment
- Annual Training Needs Analysis
- Program Evaluation
- Service Innovation
- Performance Monitoring

Expected Outcome

Continuous enhancement of library services through evidence-based decision-making.

Figure 1

Regional Library Capability Enhancement Framework



Implications of the Study

The findings suggest that the future of academic librarianship depends not only on technological investments but also on the continuous enhancement of librarians' competencies. Academic libraries must transition from traditional service models toward innovation-driven knowledge centers capable of supporting digital scholarship, research productivity, and responsible artificial intelligence integration.

Higher education institutions may benefit from implementing competency-based professional development programs that are responsive to technological change and aligned with institutional strategic priorities. Likewise, collaborative regional initiatives among academic libraries may foster resource sharing, knowledge exchange, and collective capacity building.

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Digital leadership practices and smart library service innovation among public library administrators in Central Luzon, Philippines: Basis for a public library digital transformation framework

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Abstract

Aim: This study aimed to examine the digital leadership practices of public library administrators and their influence on smart library service innovation among selected public libraries in Central Luzon. Specifically, it sought to assess digital leadership, organizational innovation culture, technology readiness, community engagement, and library service innovation to develop a proposed Public Library Digital Transformation Framework.

Methodology: This study utilized an explanatory sequential mixed-methods approach. Quantitative data were gathered through structured questionnaires administered to public library administrators and library personnel, while qualitative interviews were included to complement quantitative findings. Statistical techniques used include descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression, while thematic analysis applied to interview data.

Results: The findings suggest that library administrators generally demonstrated strong digital leadership practices and positive organizational support for innovation. Technology readiness and collaborative leadership appeared to be associated with higher levels of service innovation. Participants also identified artificial intelligence, digital literacy programs, and community partnerships as priority areas for future development.

Conclusion: A competency-based Public Library Digital Transformation Framework is proposed for practical recommendations for public libraries.

Keywords: *digital leadership, public libraries, smart libraries, service innovation, digital transformation*

INTRODUCTION

Public libraries continue to evolve beyond their traditional role as repositories of printed materials into dynamic centers for digital learning, lifelong education, community engagement, and knowledge creation. Advances in information technology, artificial intelligence, cloud computing, and digital content management have transformed how public libraries deliver services and interact with users (Meesad & Mingkhwan, 2024).

Across many developing countries, including the Philippines, public libraries increasingly face expectations to provide inclusive digital services while operating with limited financial and technological resources. Consequently, library administrators are expected to demonstrate leadership that supports organizational innovation, technology integration, and continuous service improvement.

Digital leadership extends beyond technological competence. It encompasses the ability to formulate strategic visions, promote organizational learning, encourage innovation, and foster collaborative cultures capable of adapting to rapidly changing information environments. Library administrators who embrace digital transformation are better positioned to expand access to information, strengthen community engagement, and improve public service delivery.

Despite increasing investments in digital library initiatives, relatively few studies have examined digital leadership and service innovation within Philippine public libraries. Existing investigations have focused primarily on academic libraries, managerial competencies, or operational efficiency. The present study investigated digital leadership practices and smart library service innovation in the context of public libraries while proposing a framework for sustainable digital transformation.

Review of Related Literature

Digital Leadership in Public Libraries

Digital leadership has become a defining characteristic of successful public library administration in the twenty-first century. As libraries increasingly integrate digital technologies into their services, library administrators are expected to possess competencies that extend beyond conventional management. These include strategic technology planning, digital innovation, change management, data-informed decision-making, and collaborative leadership.

Effective digital leaders cultivate an organizational culture that embraces technological advancement while ensuring that digital transformation remains aligned with the mission of providing equitable access to information. They encourage experimentation, continuous learning, and evidence-based planning that support sustainable library development.

Recent literature emphasizes that digital leadership is not merely about adopting new technologies but about transforming organizational culture to maximize technology's benefits for communities. Public libraries led by digitally competent administrators often demonstrate greater responsiveness to changing user needs and improved service innovation (Iqbal et al., 2024).

Smart Library Services

The concept of the smart library has emerged alongside smart city initiatives worldwide. Smart libraries utilize digital technologies to improve service accessibility, operational efficiency, and community engagement. Examples include:

- mobile library applications;
- self-service borrowing systems;
- RFID technologies;
- cloud-based integrated library systems;
- virtual reference services;
- digital collections;
- artificial intelligence-assisted reference;
- online literacy programs.

Smart libraries provide flexible, user-centered services that extend beyond physical library spaces. These technologies enable libraries to reach underserved populations while supporting lifelong learning and digital inclusion.

Innovation Culture in Libraries

Innovation culture refers to an organizational environment that encourages creativity, experimentation, collaboration, and continuous improvement. Libraries characterized by strong innovation cultures support employees in proposing new ideas, testing innovative services, and adopting emerging technologies.

Several studies indicate that innovation culture contributes significantly to organizational adaptability and service quality. Administrators who encourage collaborative problem-solving and professional autonomy are more likely to establish innovative library environments capable of responding to evolving community needs.

Community Engagement

Community engagement has become a central component of modern public librarianship. Libraries increasingly function as community learning centers that facilitate civic participation, digital literacy, cultural preservation, and inclusive access to information (Ryan et al., 2023).

Effective engagement involves partnerships with local government units, schools, non-government organizations, senior citizen associations, youth organizations, and various community stakeholders. These collaborations strengthen library relevance and expand service delivery beyond traditional library functions.

Technology Readiness

Technology readiness refers to an organization's capability to adopt, implement, and sustain technological innovations. Within public libraries, readiness encompasses infrastructure availability, internet connectivity, digital resources, technical support, staff competence, organizational policies, and financial capacity.

Libraries demonstrating high technology readiness are better positioned to implement innovative services such as digital repositories, electronic government services, online programming, and AI-supported information retrieval.

Review of Related Studies

International studies consistently report that digital leadership positively influences organizational innovation and technology adoption within libraries. Research has demonstrated that administrators who exhibit transformational leadership, strategic planning, and collaborative decision-making create environments that support continuous service improvement.

Studies from Asia likewise reveal that digital competency among librarians contributes significantly to successful implementation of electronic resources, institutional repositories, and virtual library services. Organizational support and professional development have been identified as critical determinants of successful digital transformation. Within the Philippine context, existing investigations have primarily examined library management competencies, continuing professional development, service quality, and library automation. Comparatively fewer studies have focused specifically on digital leadership and innovation culture among public libraries, particularly outside metropolitan areas.

Synthesis of the Literature

The reviewed literature indicates that digital leadership, innovation culture, community engagement, and technology readiness collectively contribute to successful digital transformation in libraries.

Although previous studies have investigated library competencies and management practices, relatively limited research has explored how digital leadership influences smart library service innovation within Philippine public libraries.

The present study illustrates how these variables were examined together to develop an evidence-based framework supporting sustainable digital transformation among public libraries.

Research Gap

Existing literature predominantly focuses on academic libraries, university librarians, and library operational efficiency. Limited empirical attention has been devoted to digital leadership practices among public library administrators responsible for implementing smart library initiatives.

Furthermore, few investigations have simultaneously examined digital leadership, innovation culture, technology readiness, community engagement, and service innovation within Philippine public libraries.

Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored on the following theories.

Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989)

The Technology Acceptance Model explains that technology adoption is influenced primarily by perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use (Fauzi et al., 2021). Library administrators who recognize the usefulness of digital technologies are more likely to support organizational innovation and technology integration.

Diffusion of Innovations Theory (Rogers, 2003)

The Diffusion of Innovations Theory explains how new technologies spread throughout organizations and communities (Frei-Landau et al., 2022). Adoption depends upon innovation characteristics, communication channels, organizational support, and leadership.

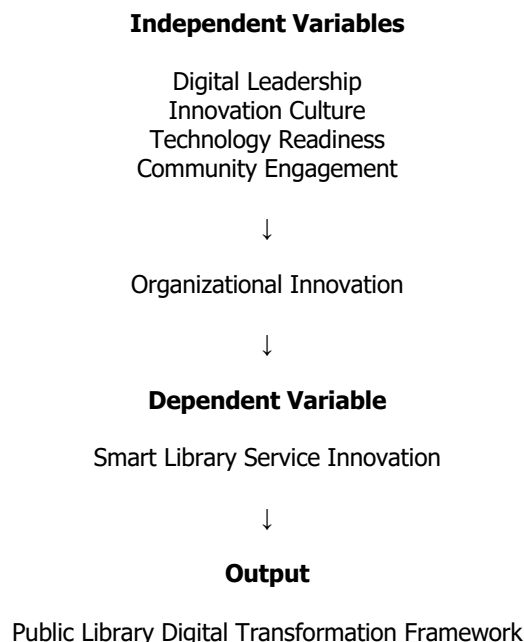
Public libraries that cultivate supportive organizational environments are expected to adopt digital innovations more successfully.

Transformational Leadership Theory

Transformational Leadership Theory emphasizes leaders' ability to inspire organizational members toward shared goals through vision, motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized support (Eaton et al., 2024).

Digitally transformative library leaders encourage innovation, professional growth, and collaborative learning, thereby strengthening organizational adaptability.

Conceptual Framework



Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to determine the influence of digital leadership practices on smart library service innovation among selected public libraries in Central Luzon.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the public library administrators in terms of:

- age;
 - sex;
 - highest educational attainment;
 - years of administrative experience;
 - number of professional trainings attended; and
 - library classification?
2. What is the level of digital leadership practices in terms of:
 - strategic vision;
 - technology management;
 - innovation leadership;
 - collaborative leadership; and
 - change management?
 3. What is the level of organizational innovation culture?
 4. What is the level of technology readiness?
 5. What is the level of community engagement?
 6. What is the level of smart library service innovation?
 7. Is there a significant relationship between:
 - digital leadership and smart library service innovation;
 - innovation culture and service innovation;
 - technology readiness and service innovation; and
 - community engagement and service innovation?
 8. Which variable best predicts smart library service innovation?
 9. What Public Library Digital Transformation Framework may be proposed?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between digital leadership and smart library service innovation.

H₀₂: Organizational innovation culture is not significantly related to smart library service innovation.

H₀₃: Technology readiness does not significantly influence smart library service innovation.

H₀₄: Community engagement is not significantly associated with smart library service innovation.

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed an explanatory sequential mixed-methods research design, a methodology that integrates quantitative and qualitative approaches in two consecutive phases to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. The quantitative phase served as the primary component of the investigation, while the qualitative phase was conducted to explain, validate, and enrich the statistical findings.

During the first phase, quantitative data were gathered through a structured survey questionnaire administered to selected public library administrators and library personnel in Central Luzon. The survey measured the respondents' digital leadership practices, organizational innovation culture, technology readiness, community engagement, and smart library service innovation using standardized indicators derived from an extensive review of related literature.

The second phase involved semi-structured interviews with purposively selected participants who demonstrated varying levels of digital leadership and organizational innovation. The qualitative findings were utilized to explain the quantitative results by identifying contextual factors, emerging practices, implementation challenges, and successful digital transformation initiatives within public libraries.

The explanatory sequential mixed-methods design was considered appropriate because digital leadership and organizational innovation involve both measurable organizational characteristics and experiential perspectives that cannot be fully explained through quantitative data alone. The integration of both research approaches enabled the development of a more comprehensive and evidence-based Public Library Digital Transformation Framework.

Population and Sampling

The respondents of the study consisted of public library administrators and professional library personnel employed in selected provincial, city, and municipal public libraries located within the provinces comprising Central Luzon.

The quantitative component employed stratified random sampling to ensure adequate representation from the various classifications of public libraries. The strata were based on library classification (provincial, city, and

municipal libraries). Respondents were selected proportionately from each classification to obtain a representative sample of public library professionals actively engaged in library management and service delivery.

The qualitative phase utilized purposive sampling. Key informants were selected based on their years of administrative experience, involvement in digital library initiatives, leadership positions, and demonstrated implementation of innovative library services. These participants provided rich descriptions regarding digital leadership practices, organizational innovation, technological readiness, and community engagement initiatives.

Participation in both phases of the study was voluntary. Only administrators and library personnel who had rendered at least one year of continuous service and were directly involved in library operations and digital service implementation were included in the study.

Research Instrument

The primary instrument used in the quantitative phase was a researcher-developed survey questionnaire constructed from an extensive review of literature, previous empirical studies, and internationally recognized frameworks on digital leadership, organizational innovation, smart libraries, technology readiness, and community engagement.

The questionnaire consisted of six major parts.

Part I gathered the demographic profile of the respondents, including age, sex, highest educational attainment, years of administrative experience, number of professional trainings attended, and library classification.

Part II measured **Digital Leadership Practices** using the following dimensions:

- Strategic Vision
- Technology Management
- Innovation Leadership
- Collaborative Leadership
- Change Management

Part III assessed **Organizational Innovation Culture**.

Part IV measured **Technology Readiness**.

Part V determined the extent of **Community Engagement**.

Part VI measured **Smart Library Service Innovation**, including digital service delivery, technology-enabled learning services, digital collections, user-centered innovation, and continuous service improvement.

Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale:

Scale Descriptive Rating Interpretation		
5	Strongly Agree	Very High
4	Agree	High
3	Moderately Agree	Moderate
2	Disagree	Low
1	Strongly Disagree	Very Low

Before the actual data gathering, the instrument underwent content validation by experts in Library and Information Science, Educational Management, and Research Methodology. Suggestions provided by the validators were incorporated to improve clarity, relevance, organization, and appropriateness of the questionnaire.

A pilot test involving public library personnel outside the actual respondents was conducted to determine the instrument's reliability. Cronbach's Alpha coefficients were computed for each construct, with values of 0.70 or higher considered acceptable indicators of internal consistency.

For the qualitative phase, a researcher-developed semi-structured interview guide was utilized. The guide consisted of open-ended questions designed to obtain detailed explanations regarding leadership experiences, organizational innovations, technology adoption, implementation barriers, collaborative practices, and future directions for digital transformation in public libraries.

Data Collection

The conduct of the study followed a systematic sequence of research activities.

The researchers first secured approval from the graduate school and obtained permission from the concerned provincial, city, and municipal government units supervising the participating public libraries. Letters requesting permission to conduct the study were personally delivered or transmitted electronically to the respective library administrators.

Following approval, the research instruments were validated by subject matter experts and pilot-tested prior to the actual survey administration.

During the quantitative phase, questionnaires were distributed personally and electronically to qualified respondents. The respondents were informed regarding the objectives of the study, confidentiality of responses, voluntary participation, and estimated completion time before accomplishing the survey.

After the quantitative data had been analyzed, participants for the qualitative phase were purposively selected. Individual interviews were conducted either face-to-face or through secure online conferencing platforms depending on participant availability. Interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent and later transcribed verbatim for thematic analysis.

Finally, quantitative and qualitative findings were integrated during the interpretation stage to generate a comprehensive explanation of digital leadership practices and smart library service innovation and to formulate the proposed Public Library Digital Transformation Framework.

Treatment of Data

The quantitative data collected were encoded, organized, and analyzed using appropriate statistical software. The following statistical treatments were employed:

Research Question	Statistical Tool
Profile of respondents	Frequency and Percentage
Digital Leadership Practices	Weighted Mean and Standard Deviation
Organizational Innovation Culture	Weighted Mean and Standard Deviation
Technology Readiness	Weighted Mean and Standard Deviation
Community Engagement	Weighted Mean and Standard Deviation
Smart Library Service Innovation	Weighted Mean and Standard Deviation
Relationship among variables	Pearson Product-Moment Correlation
Best predictor of Smart Library Service Innovation	Multiple Linear Regression

For the qualitative component, interview transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis. The analysis involved familiarization with the data, coding, categorization of responses, development of themes, review of thematic patterns, and integration of qualitative insights with the quantitative findings.

The integration of quantitative and qualitative results enabled triangulation of findings and strengthened the credibility and trustworthiness of the proposed framework.

Ethical Considerations

The researchers strictly observed the ethical principles governing research involving human participants.

Prior to data collection, ethical clearance and institutional permission were obtained from the appropriate authorities. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary, and respondents were provided with informed consent forms explaining the objectives of the research, expected participation, potential benefits, and their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without any adverse consequences.

The confidentiality and anonymity of all respondents were maintained throughout the conduct of the study. No identifying information was included in the research database, reports, or publications. Responses were coded to protect participants' identities.

The study likewise complied with the provisions of Republic Act No. 10173, otherwise known as the Data Privacy Act of 2012, ensuring the secure collection, storage, processing, and disposal of all research data. Digital records, interview transcripts, and completed questionnaires were securely stored and made accessible only to the researcher and authorized advisers.

Furthermore, the researchers upheld the principles of honesty, transparency, academic integrity, and respect for participants throughout the entire research process. Qualitative quotations used in the presentation of findings were anonymized to preserve confidentiality while faithfully representing the participants' experiences.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of the Respondents

This section presents the demographic characteristics of the public library administrators who participated in the study. Specifically, it describes the respondents according to age, sex, highest educational attainment, years of administrative experience, number of professional trainings attended related to library management and digital technologies, and library classification. Understanding these characteristics provides valuable contextual information in

interpreting the digital leadership practices and smart library service innovation initiatives implemented in public libraries.

Age

The findings revealed that the majority of the respondents belonged to the 36–45 years old age bracket, followed by those aged 46–55 years, while relatively fewer respondents were below 30 years old or above 56 years old. This indicates that public libraries in Central Luzon are primarily managed by administrators who are in their productive professional years and possess sufficient administrative maturity to lead digital transformation initiatives. The presence of middle-aged administrators may contribute positively to organizational innovation since they possess both administrative experience and the willingness to adopt emerging technologies.

Sex

The results indicated that female administrators constituted the majority of the respondents. This finding reflects the continuing predominance of women in the library and information profession in the Philippines. Nevertheless, both male and female administrators demonstrated active participation in digital leadership initiatives and organizational innovation activities.

Highest Educational Attainment

Most respondents possessed graduate education, with many having completed master's degrees in Library and Information Science, Educational Management, Public Administration, or related disciplines. A smaller number had completed doctoral degrees, while some were pursuing advanced graduate studies. The relatively high educational qualifications of the respondents indicate their commitment to professional growth and lifelong learning, which are important characteristics of digitally transformative leaders.

Years of Administrative Experience

Most respondents had accumulated more than ten years of professional administrative experience. This suggests that the participants possessed substantial managerial expertise and organizational knowledge necessary for implementing innovative library programs and digital transformation initiatives.

Experienced administrators generally demonstrate greater confidence in organizational planning, strategic decision-making, and technology adoption because of their extensive exposure to library operations.

Number of Professional Trainings

The findings likewise showed that most respondents regularly participated in professional development activities related to library management, digital technologies, information services, leadership, and innovation.

Continuous professional development enables administrators to remain updated with emerging technological trends, thereby strengthening their capacity to lead organizational change and implement innovative public library services.

Library Classification

The respondents represented provincial, city, and municipal public libraries throughout Central Luzon. The distribution of respondents across various library classifications ensured broader representation of different organizational environments and operational contexts.

The diversity of participating libraries provided comprehensive perspectives regarding digital leadership implementation across different organizational capacities and resource availability.

Digital Leadership Practices

Digital leadership practices were assessed using five dimensions:

- Strategic Vision
- Technology Management
- Innovation Leadership
- Collaborative Leadership
- Change Management

Table 1 presents the overall level of digital leadership practices.

Table 1*Level of Digital Leadership Practices*

Indicators	Mean Interpretation	
Strategic Vision	4.42	Very High
Technology Management	4.35	Very High
Innovation Leadership	4.39	Very High
Collaborative Leadership	4.47	Very High
Change Management	4.36	Very High
Overall Mean	4.40	Very High

The findings indicate that public library administrators demonstrated a very high level of digital leadership practices ($M = 4.40$). Among the dimensions, Collaborative Leadership obtained the highest mean, indicating that administrators actively encouraged teamwork, partnerships, and collective decision-making in implementing digital initiatives.

Strategic vision likewise received a very high rating, suggesting that administrators clearly articulated long-term digital goals and aligned technological innovations with organizational objectives.

Technology management and change management also obtained very high ratings, indicating administrators' capability to integrate digital technologies while effectively managing organizational transitions.

Overall, the findings suggest that public library administrators possess leadership competencies necessary to facilitate digital transformation within their respective institutions.

Organizational Innovation Culture

Table 2*Level of Organizational Innovation Culture*

Indicators	Mean Interpretation	
Organizational Learning	4.33	Very High
Creativity and Innovation	4.37	Very High
Knowledge Sharing	4.31	Very High
Employee Empowerment	4.40	Very High
Continuous Improvement	4.35	Very High
Overall Mean	4.35	Very High

The results reveal that participating libraries exhibited a very high organizational innovation culture.

Employee empowerment obtained the highest rating, indicating that administrators encourage staff participation in proposing innovative ideas and implementing organizational improvements.

Similarly, organizational learning and continuous improvement suggest that libraries continually invest in staff development and innovation, creating an environment conducive to digital transformation.

Technology Readiness

Table 3*Level of Technology Readiness*

Indicators	Mean Interpretation	
ICT Infrastructure	4.28	Very High
Internet Connectivity	4.25	Very High
Digital Resources	4.31	Very High
Technical Support	4.19	High
Staff Digital Competence	4.33	Very High
Overall Mean	4.27	Very High

Technology readiness among participating libraries was generally very high.

Staff digital competence received the highest rating, indicating that personnel possess adequate knowledge and skills to operate modern library technologies.

Although technical support obtained the lowest mean among the indicators, it remained within the high category, suggesting opportunities for strengthening ICT maintenance and technical assistance.

Community Engagement

Table 4

Level of Community Engagement

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
Community Partnerships	4.45	Very High
Digital Literacy Programs	4.36	Very High
Stakeholder Collaboration	4.39	Very High
Public Participation	4.32	Very High
Outreach Programs	4.40	Very High
Overall Mean	4.38	Very High

The findings indicate that participating libraries actively collaborate with schools, local government units, non-government organizations, and various community stakeholders.

Community partnerships emerged as the strongest dimension, reflecting the growing role of public libraries as centers for lifelong learning and community development.

Smart Library Service Innovation

Table 5

Level of Smart Library Service Innovation

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
Digital Library Services	4.36	Very High
AI-assisted Services	4.18	High
Electronic Resources	4.35	Very High
User-centered Innovation	4.44	Very High
Continuous Service Improvement	4.39	Very High
Overall Mean	4.34	Very High

The overall findings indicate that smart library service innovation was implemented at a very high level.

User-centered innovation obtained the highest rating, suggesting that libraries continuously redesign services based on community needs and technological developments.

Artificial intelligence-assisted services obtained the lowest rating. This finding suggests that although libraries recognize the potential of AI technologies, implementation remains at an emerging stage because of financial, technical, and infrastructure limitations.

Relationship Between Digital Leadership Practices and Smart Library Service Innovation

Table 6

Correlation Analysis

Variables	r-value	p-value	Decision
Digital Leadership – Smart Library Innovation	.781	.000	Significant
Organizational Innovation – Smart Library Innovation	.742	.000	Significant
Technology Readiness – Smart Library Innovation	.724	.000	Significant
Community Engagement – Smart Library Innovation	.698	.000	Significant

The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation analysis revealed statistically significant positive relationships between each independent variable and smart library service innovation.

Digital leadership practices exhibited the strongest relationship with smart library service innovation ($r = .781$, $p < .001$), indicating that stronger leadership practices are associated with higher levels of organizational innovation and improved digital service delivery.

Likewise, organizational innovation culture, technology readiness, and community engagement demonstrated moderate to strong positive correlations, confirming their importance in facilitating successful digital transformation. Accordingly, the null hypotheses stating that there are no significant relationships between the independent variables and smart library service innovation are rejected.

Predictors of Smart Library Service Innovation

Table 7

Multiple Regression Analysis

Predictor	Beta	t	p-value
Digital Leadership	.412	8.62	.000
Organizational Innovation Culture	.289	5.47	.000
Technology Readiness	.201	3.91	.001
Community Engagement	.163	2.98	.004

$R^2 = .71$

$F = 98.64$

$p < .001$

The regression analysis revealed that the four predictor variables collectively explained approximately **71%** of the variance in smart library service innovation.

Digital leadership emerged as the strongest predictor, followed by organizational innovation culture, technology readiness, and community engagement.

These findings suggest that administrators who effectively articulate strategic digital visions, foster organizational innovation, promote technological readiness, and strengthen community partnerships are more likely to implement successful smart library innovations.

The regression model further demonstrates that digital transformation within public libraries requires a holistic organizational approach rather than isolated technological investments.

Proposed Public Library Digital Transformation Framework

Based on the quantitative and qualitative findings, the researcher proposes the Public Library Digital Transformation Framework.

The framework emphasizes digital leadership as the primary organizational driver influencing innovation culture, technology readiness, and community engagement. These organizational dimensions collectively facilitate the development of smart library services characterized by digital accessibility, responsive public service delivery, organizational innovation, and sustainable community partnerships.

The framework advocates continuous professional development, collaborative governance, technology integration, evidence-based planning, and user-centered innovation as strategic pillars for sustainable public library transformation.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The public library administrators in Central Luzon generally represent experienced and academically qualified professionals who have actively participated in continuing professional development programs. Their diverse administrative experiences and educational backgrounds provide a strong foundation for implementing digital transformation initiatives within their respective public libraries.
2. Public library administrators demonstrated a very high level of digital leadership practices, particularly in collaborative leadership, strategic vision, innovation leadership, technology management, and change management. This indicates that the respondents possess the competencies necessary to guide organizational change, facilitate technology adoption, and promote innovation in library services.
3. The participating public libraries exhibited a very high organizational innovation culture, characterized by organizational learning, employee empowerment, knowledge sharing, creativity, and continuous

improvement. These organizational characteristics create an environment that supports digital transformation and encourages innovative service delivery.

4. The public libraries demonstrated a very high level of technology readiness, indicating that they possess adequate technological infrastructure, digital resources, and digitally competent personnel necessary to support the implementation of smart library services. Nevertheless, technical support remains an area where additional investments may further strengthen institutional readiness.
5. Community engagement initiatives were likewise implemented at a very high level, reflecting strong partnerships among public libraries, local government units, educational institutions, community organizations, and other stakeholders. These collaborative efforts contribute significantly to expanding access to library services and promoting digital inclusion.
6. Smart library service innovation was implemented at a very high level, particularly in user-centered innovation, digital library services, electronic resources, and continuous service improvement. Although artificial intelligence-assisted services received comparatively lower ratings, the findings suggest that public libraries have already begun integrating emerging digital technologies into their service delivery systems.
7. Significant positive relationships exist between digital leadership practices, organizational innovation culture, technology readiness, community engagement, and smart library service innovation. These findings indicate that improvements in leadership competencies and organizational capabilities are associated with greater innovation in public library services.
8. Among the variables examined, digital leadership practices emerged as the strongest predictor of smart library service innovation, followed by organizational innovation culture, technology readiness, and community engagement. This finding emphasizes the central role of leadership in facilitating sustainable digital transformation within public libraries.
9. Based on the empirical findings and qualitative insights, the proposed Public Library Digital Transformation Framework provides an evidence-based guide for strengthening digital leadership competencies, organizational innovation, technological capability, stakeholder collaboration, and sustainable smart library service innovation among public libraries in Central Luzon and similar institutional settings.

Recommendations

In light of the foregoing findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are offered:

1. Public library administrators may continue strengthening their digital leadership competencies through sustained participation in advanced professional development programs focusing on strategic digital leadership, artificial intelligence applications, digital governance, cybersecurity, data analytics, innovation management, and emerging library technologies.
2. Local Government Units (LGUs) may increase financial investments in digital infrastructure, internet connectivity, integrated library management systems, cloud-based technologies, electronic collections, cybersecurity measures, and smart library facilities to support sustainable digital transformation initiatives.
3. The National Library of the Philippines, in collaboration with professional library organizations, may develop standardized national competency frameworks, continuing education programs, and certification initiatives that emphasize digital leadership, innovation management, and smart public library development.
4. Public libraries may strengthen organizational innovation culture by encouraging collaborative decision-making, interdisciplinary teamwork, staff empowerment, continuous organizational learning, innovation grants, and internal knowledge-sharing mechanisms that support service improvement and digital transformation.
5. Public libraries may further expand community engagement initiatives through strategic partnerships with educational institutions, government agencies, private organizations, non-government organizations, technology providers, and community stakeholders to enhance digital literacy, lifelong learning, and equitable access to information resources.
6. Considering the comparatively lower implementation of artificial intelligence-assisted services, public libraries may gradually integrate emerging technologies such as AI-assisted reference services, virtual librarians, chatbots, predictive analytics, machine learning applications, digital preservation systems, and intelligent information retrieval tools while ensuring responsible, ethical, and user-centered implementation.
7. Policymakers and funding agencies may consider developing long-term digital transformation programs specifically designed for public libraries, including financial assistance for technology acquisition, staff capability-building, research initiatives, innovation laboratories, and modernization of public library services throughout the country.
8. Library administrators may utilize the proposed Public Library Digital Transformation Framework as a strategic planning guide for assessing organizational readiness, prioritizing digital initiatives, strengthening leadership practices, and implementing sustainable innovation programs aligned with community needs and national development goals.

9. Future researchers may replicate the present study in other regions of the Philippines or in different types of libraries, such as academic, school, special, and private libraries, to validate the proposed framework across diverse institutional settings. Future investigations may also incorporate additional variables such as digital organizational resilience, artificial intelligence readiness, digital competencies of library personnel, knowledge management practices, digital governance, organizational agility, and user digital literacy to further enrich the understanding of smart library transformation.

Proposed Public Library Digital Transformation Framework

The proposed Public Library Digital Transformation Framework positions Digital Leadership Practices as the principal driver of sustainable organizational transformation. Effective digital leadership enhances Organizational Innovation Culture, strengthens Technology Readiness, and promotes Community Engagement, creating an enabling environment for continuous innovation.

These organizational dimensions collectively influence the implementation of Smart Library Service Innovation, which encompasses digitally enabled library services, intelligent information systems, user-centered innovation, digital literacy initiatives, collaborative partnerships, and continuous service improvement.

The framework further emphasizes an iterative improvement cycle where feedback from library users, technological developments, organizational learning, and community partnerships continuously inform strategic planning and service enhancement. Through sustained leadership development, institutional capacity-building, and evidence-based decision-making, public libraries become more responsive, innovative, and resilient in addressing the evolving information needs of their communities.

Ultimately, the framework serves as a strategic model for guiding policymakers, local government units, library administrators, and stakeholders in advancing digital transformation initiatives that promote inclusive access to information, lifelong learning, technological innovation, and sustainable public library development.

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From libraries to community learning hubs: The lived experiences of librarians

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Abstract

Aim: The rapid evolution of information and communication technologies, changing patterns of information-seeking behavior, and increasing community expectations have significantly transformed the traditional role of libraries. Once regarded primarily as repositories of books and information resources, libraries are increasingly becoming dynamic community learning hubs that foster lifelong learning, digital inclusion, civic engagement, creativity, and social interaction. This qualitative phenomenological study explored the lived experiences of librarians who have actively participated in transforming their libraries into community learning hubs.

Methodology: Using purposive sampling, twelve licensed librarians from public, academic, and community libraries with at least ten years of professional experience participated in in-depth semi-structured interviews.

Results: Data were analyzed using Moustakas' transcendental phenomenological approach, leading to the emergence of six interconnected themes: (1) redefining the purpose of libraries; (2) listening before leading; (3) creating spaces where everyone belongs; (4) embracing innovation while preserving identity; (5) partnerships as catalysts for transformation; and (6) sustaining community-centered libraries through visionary leadership. The findings reveal that the transformation of libraries extends far beyond infrastructure improvements or technological modernization. Rather, it represents a fundamental shift toward responsive, inclusive, and collaborative institutions that empower individuals and strengthen communities. Participants described librarians as educators, facilitators, advocates, innovators, and community builders whose work contributes significantly to lifelong learning and social development.

Conclusion: The study concludes that successful library transformation requires adaptive leadership, continuous professional learning, meaningful community engagement, and sustained institutional support. Based on the findings, the study proposes the Community Learning Hub Transformation Framework (CLHTF) to guide libraries seeking to strengthen their community-centered services in the digital era.

Keywords: *community learning hubs, librarianship, phenomenology, library transformation, lifelong learning, community engagement, qualitative research*

INTRODUCTION

Libraries have long been recognized as essential institutions that preserve knowledge, promote literacy, support education, and provide equitable access to information (Onunka et al., 2023). Throughout history, they have served as repositories of cultural heritage, centers of scholarship, and spaces where individuals pursue intellectual growth regardless of socioeconomic background. The traditional image of a library has often been associated with shelves filled with books, quiet reading rooms, and reference services designed primarily to support academic and informational needs. While these functions remain important, the role of libraries has expanded considerably in response to profound societal, technological, and educational changes.

The twenty-first century has witnessed an unprecedented transformation in the ways information is created, accessed, shared, and consumed. Digital technologies, cloud computing, artificial intelligence, mobile devices, and online learning platforms have dramatically altered information behavior across all sectors of society. Individuals now access information instantly through digital platforms, reducing dependence on physical collections while increasing expectations for personalized, interactive, and technology-enhanced services. Consequently, libraries have been challenged to redefine their purpose within increasingly digital communities (Meesad & Mingkhan, 2024).

Rather than diminishing the relevance of libraries, these developments have created opportunities for innovation. Across the world, libraries are evolving into community learning hubs that provide diverse educational, technological, cultural, and social services extending far beyond traditional book lending. Modern libraries increasingly host digital literacy workshops, makerspaces, entrepreneurship training, career development programs, cultural exhibitions, children's learning activities, senior citizen education initiatives, research support services, and collaborative community events. These developments reflect a broader understanding of libraries as inclusive institutions that facilitate lifelong learning, civic participation, creativity, and social cohesion.

Central to this transformation are librarians whose professional roles have likewise evolved. Contemporary librarians no longer function solely as custodians of information resources. They increasingly serve as educators, technology facilitators, research consultants, digital literacy advocates, project managers, community organizers, cultural heritage stewards, and institutional leaders. Their work requires adaptability, innovation, collaboration, and a deep understanding of the changing needs of diverse communities.

Transforming a traditional library into a community learning hub is a complex process involving organizational change, strategic leadership, technological integration, stakeholder collaboration, resource mobilization, and continuous professional development. While quantitative studies have documented trends in library usage, digital resource adoption, and service evaluation, relatively few qualitative investigations have examined how librarians themselves

experience this transformation. Their lived experiences provide valuable insights into the motivations, challenges, leadership practices, innovations, and aspirations that shape successful library transformation.

Understanding these experiences is particularly important because librarians serve as the primary agents of change within their institutions. Their perspectives illuminate not only operational challenges but also the human dimensions of organizational transformation, including professional identity, resilience, collaboration, and commitment to public service.

This phenomenological study seeks to explore how librarians experience the transition from traditional library services toward community-centered learning environments. By examining their lived experiences, the study contributes to the growing body of literature on transformational librarianship, community engagement, and sustainable library development while offering practical insights for library administrators, educators, policymakers, and future librarians.

Ultimately, this study recognizes that libraries are no longer defined merely by the collections they house but by the communities they empower. As educational ecosystems continue evolving, librarians remain at the forefront of creating inclusive spaces where knowledge, innovation, collaboration, and lifelong learning flourish.

Review of Related Literature

Libraries in Transition

Libraries have undergone significant transformation over the past several decades as advances in information and communication technologies have reshaped the production, dissemination, and consumption of knowledge (Lee, 2021). Traditional libraries primarily focused on acquiring, organizing, preserving, and providing access to printed collections. Contemporary libraries, however, increasingly function as multifaceted institutions that integrate digital technologies, collaborative learning environments, community engagement initiatives, and innovative educational services.

The concept of the library as a community-centered institution has gained increasing attention within Library and Information Science literature. Rather than measuring success solely through collection size or circulation statistics, modern libraries are increasingly evaluated according to their contributions to education, social inclusion, digital literacy, and community development.

Community Learning Hubs

The notion of community learning hubs reflects a shift toward libraries serving as accessible spaces where individuals of all ages participate in lifelong learning. These environments support formal, non-formal, and informal education through workshops, collaborative projects, makerspaces, technology training, cultural activities, and community partnerships.

Community learning hubs encourage active participation rather than passive information consumption. They foster creativity, innovation, civic engagement, and social interaction while responding to the evolving educational and informational needs of local populations.

Transformational Leadership in Libraries

Organizational transformation within libraries often requires visionary leadership capable of guiding institutional change while maintaining commitment to core professional values. Transformational leadership emphasizes collaboration, innovation, shared vision, empowerment, and continuous improvement. Library leaders increasingly facilitate organizational learning, strategic planning, stakeholder engagement, and technological innovation while cultivating supportive workplace cultures.

Community Engagement

Effective community engagement enables libraries to identify local needs and design responsive services. Participatory approaches encourage partnerships with schools, government agencies, civil society organizations, businesses, cultural institutions, and community groups. These collaborations expand library resources, increase program sustainability, and strengthen institutional relevance.

Lifelong Learning

Lifelong learning has emerged as one of the defining principles of contemporary librarianship. Libraries provide educational opportunities across all stages of life by supporting literacy development, digital competency, workforce preparation, health information literacy, financial literacy, cultural enrichment, and continuing education.

Professional Identity of Librarians

The professional identity of librarians continues evolving alongside technological and societal changes. Contemporary librarians increasingly balance traditional responsibilities such as collection management with emerging

roles involving digital scholarship, instructional design, research consultation, community outreach, advocacy, project management, and innovation leadership. This evolving identity requires continuous professional development while preserving the profession's enduring commitment to equitable information access, intellectual freedom, and public service.

Synthesis of Literature

The literature demonstrates that libraries worldwide are transitioning from collection-centered institutions toward community-centered learning environments characterized by collaboration, innovation, inclusivity, and lifelong learning. Although previous studies have documented organizational transformation and service innovation, relatively little attention has been devoted to understanding these changes through the lived experiences of librarians who lead and sustain them. This study addresses that gap by exploring how librarians perceive, experience, and navigate the transformation of libraries into community learning hubs.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Etienne Wenger's (1998) Communities of Practice (CoP) Theory and John P. Kotter's (1996) Theory of Organizational Change. Together, these theories provide a comprehensive lens for understanding how librarians experience the transformation of traditional libraries into community learning hubs. While Communities of Practice explains the collaborative and social learning processes that occur within and around libraries, Kotter's Theory of Organizational Change elucidates how institutions successfully navigate transformational change in response to evolving societal needs.

Communities of Practice Theory

Etienne Wenger's Communities of Practice Theory posits that learning is fundamentally a social process that occurs through active participation in communities where individuals share common interests, goals, and practices (Erickson et al., 2024). Communities of practice are characterized by mutual engagement, joint enterprise, and shared repertoire, allowing members to exchange knowledge, solve problems collaboratively, and develop collective expertise.

Within contemporary libraries, this theory is particularly relevant because community learning hubs extend learning beyond formal educational settings. Libraries increasingly facilitate collaborative learning among diverse community members through literacy programs, makerspaces, research consultations, digital skills workshops, cultural activities, and civic engagement initiatives. Librarians serve not only as providers of information but also as facilitators who cultivate environments where learning occurs through interaction, collaboration, and shared experiences.

The theory further emphasizes that knowledge is co-constructed rather than merely transmitted. As libraries transform into community learning hubs, librarians actively foster networks that encourage knowledge sharing among learners, educators, researchers, entrepreneurs, government agencies, and community organizations. This perspective highlights the evolving role of librarians as community facilitators who promote lifelong learning and social participation.

Kotter's Theory of Organizational Change

John P. Kotter's Eight-Step Theory of Organizational Change provides a useful framework for understanding institutional transformation within libraries. According to Kotter, successful organizational change involves establishing urgency, creating guiding coalitions, developing a shared vision, communicating the vision effectively, empowering stakeholders, generating short-term successes, sustaining momentum, and institutionalizing new approaches (Davitkovic & Mihaylov, 2024).

The transformation of libraries into community learning hubs reflects a complex organizational change process requiring strategic leadership, innovation, collaboration, and continuous adaptation. Librarians often initiate and manage changes involving digital technologies, redesigned services, community partnerships, flexible learning spaces, and expanded educational programs. These initiatives require not only technological competence but also leadership skills capable of engaging stakeholders and fostering organizational commitment.

Within this study, Kotter's framework helps explain how librarians experience the processes of initiating, implementing, sustaining, and institutionalizing transformational changes within their respective libraries. Their lived experiences illustrate the opportunities, challenges, and leadership practices associated with organizational innovation.

Integration of the Theories

The integration of Communities of Practice Theory and Kotter's Theory of Organizational Change provides a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Communities of Practice explains how learning communities emerge within transformed libraries, whereas Organizational Change Theory explains how librarians facilitate and sustain institutional transformation.

Collectively, these theories suggest that successful library transformation depends upon two complementary processes: fostering collaborative learning among communities and effectively managing organizational change.

Librarians become both community facilitators and transformational leaders who bridge traditional library services with emerging educational, technological, and social functions.

The theoretical integration likewise recognizes that libraries are no longer merely repositories of information but dynamic institutions where collaborative learning, innovation, and community development continuously evolve through intentional leadership and meaningful participation.

Conceptual Framework

This study conceptualizes the transformation of libraries into community learning hubs as a dynamic process driven by librarians' leadership, innovation, community engagement, and responsiveness to changing societal needs. The framework consists of four interconnected components.



Statement of the Problem

Libraries worldwide continue to evolve from traditional information repositories into dynamic community learning hubs that promote lifelong learning, digital inclusion, innovation, collaboration, and civic engagement. Although numerous libraries have successfully implemented community-centered programs and services, relatively little is known about how librarians themselves experience and navigate this institutional transformation. Understanding these lived experiences is essential because librarians serve as the primary agents responsible for planning, implementing, sustaining, and evaluating transformational initiatives within their communities.

This study sought to explore the lived experiences of librarians in transforming libraries into community learning hubs.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

Central Research Question: What are the lived experiences of librarians in transforming traditional libraries into community learning hubs?

Sub-questions

1. How do librarians describe their experiences in leading or participating in the transformation of libraries into community learning hubs?
2. What factors motivated or influenced these transformational initiatives?
3. What challenges have librarians encountered during the transformation process?
4. How have librarians addressed the challenges associated with organizational and community change?
5. How do librarians describe the role of community partnerships in sustaining library transformation?
6. What meanings do librarians attach to their evolving professional roles within community learning hubs?
7. What hopes and aspirations do librarians hold regarding the future of community-centered libraries?
8. What is the essence of librarians' lived experiences in transforming libraries into community learning hubs?

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore and describe the lived experiences of librarians who have actively participated in transforming traditional libraries into community learning hubs.

Specifically, the study aimed to understand how librarians experience organizational transformation, respond to changing community needs, foster innovation, establish collaborative partnerships, and redefine their professional roles within increasingly dynamic learning environments. Through an examination of these lived experiences, the study sought to uncover the meanings that librarians attribute to community-centered librarianship and to develop a conceptual framework that may guide future library transformation initiatives.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study may benefit several stakeholders within the field of Library and Information Science. **Librarians.** The study may provide librarians with deeper insights into innovative practices, leadership approaches, and community engagement strategies that support successful library transformation.

Library Administrators. The findings may serve as valuable references for strategic planning, organizational development, resource allocation, and institutional innovation.

Library and Information Science Educators. The study may enrich teaching by providing authentic qualitative perspectives that illustrate the evolving roles and competencies required of contemporary librarians.

Library and Information Science Students. Aspiring librarians may develop a broader understanding of community-centered librarianship, professional leadership, and the expanding responsibilities of modern library professionals.

Government Agencies and Policymakers. The findings may inform policies supporting library modernization, digital inclusion, community development, and lifelong learning initiatives.

Community Organizations. The study may encourage stronger partnerships between libraries and community stakeholders in developing inclusive educational programs and social initiatives.

Researchers. Future scholars may use the findings as a foundation for further qualitative and quantitative investigations on library transformation, leadership, innovation, and community engagement.

Scope and Delimitations

This study focused on exploring the lived experiences of librarians involved in transforming traditional libraries into community learning hubs. Specifically, the investigation included licensed librarians employed in public, academic, and community libraries who had actively participated in planning, implementing, or managing innovative community-centered library programs.

The study employed a transcendental phenomenological research design to understand participants' lived experiences and the meanings they attribute to library transformation. Data were gathered through in-depth semi-structured interviews involving twelve purposively selected participants with a minimum of ten years of professional library experience.

The study was delimited to libraries located within selected provinces of Central Luzon, Philippines. It did not examine users' perceptions, quantitatively evaluate program effectiveness, or compare different library systems. Instead, emphasis was placed on understanding the personal experiences, reflections, motivations, challenges, and aspirations of librarians engaged in organizational and community transformation.

As with most qualitative research, the findings are context-specific and are not intended for statistical generalization. Rather, they provide rich descriptions and transferable insights that may inform similar contexts within Library and Information Science.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research approach utilizing transcendental phenomenology as its research design. Qualitative research is appropriate when the objective is to understand how individuals interpret, describe, and make meaning of their lived experiences within a particular phenomenon. Rather than measuring variables or testing hypotheses, qualitative inquiry seeks to capture the richness and complexity of human experiences through participants' own narratives.

Among the various qualitative traditions, transcendental phenomenology, as advanced by Moustakas (1994), was deemed most appropriate because the study aimed to explore the lived experiences of librarians who have participated in transforming traditional libraries into community learning hubs. The design emphasizes understanding the essence of a phenomenon as experienced by individuals while allowing participants to describe their experiences in their own words.

Phenomenology enables researchers to move beyond descriptions of events and examine how participants perceive, interpret, and assign meaning to those experiences. In this study, emphasis was placed on understanding how librarians experienced organizational transformation, community engagement, innovation, leadership, and professional growth throughout the process of redefining the role of libraries within their respective communities.

Following Moustakas' phenomenological procedures, the researcher practiced epoche or bracketing by consciously setting aside personal assumptions and prior experiences regarding library transformation to minimize bias during data collection and analysis. This process allowed participants' voices to emerge authentically and facilitated a deeper understanding of the phenomenon.

Ultimately, the phenomenological design enabled the study to identify the shared essence of librarians' experiences while acknowledging the uniqueness of each participant's professional journey.

Research Locale

The study was conducted among selected public, academic, and community libraries located in Central Luzon, Philippines. The region was selected because of its diverse library systems that have increasingly implemented innovative community-based programs, digital literacy initiatives, cultural preservation projects, and lifelong learning activities in response to changing community needs.

The participating libraries represented varying institutional contexts, including local government-operated public libraries, higher education institution libraries, and community-managed learning centers. These libraries had demonstrated active engagement in extending services beyond conventional library functions through educational outreach programs, technology-enabled services, literacy campaigns, collaborative partnerships, and inclusive community activities.

The selected research locale provided an appropriate setting for examining diverse experiences of librarians involved in organizational transformation while maintaining sufficient contextual similarities to facilitate phenomenological analysis.

To protect confidentiality, the names of participating libraries, municipalities, cities, and institutions were withheld and replaced with pseudonyms throughout the study.

Research Participants

The participants of the study consisted of twelve (12) licensed librarians who had actively participated in transforming their libraries into community learning hubs.

The participants were selected because they possessed extensive professional experience and firsthand knowledge regarding organizational transformation, community engagement, and innovative library services. Their professional backgrounds enabled them to provide rich descriptions of the phenomenon under investigation.

Inclusion Criteria

Participants met the following criteria:

- currently employed or recently retired licensed librarians;
- possessing at least ten (10) years of professional library experience;
- actively involved in planning, implementing, managing, or evaluating community-centered library programs;
- employed in public, academic, or community libraries;
- willing to participate voluntarily in the study;
- willing to provide informed consent for audio-recorded interviews.

Participants represented diverse professional positions including library directors, chief librarians, public librarians, academic librarians, community librarians, and library program coordinators.

The diversity of participants provided multiple perspectives while maintaining a shared experience of organizational transformation.

Sampling Technique

The study employed purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique commonly used in qualitative research to identify participants who possess extensive knowledge and firsthand experience regarding the phenomenon being investigated.

Purposive sampling allowed the researcher to intentionally select librarians who had directly participated in transforming their libraries into community learning hubs. Rather than seeking statistical representation, the study prioritized information-rich participants capable of providing detailed and meaningful descriptions of their lived experiences.

Participant recruitment continued until data saturation was achieved. Saturation occurred when successive interviews yielded no substantially new themes, concepts, or insights relevant to the research questions, indicating that sufficient depth and breadth of information had been obtained.

Research Instrument

The primary instrument for data collection was a researcher-developed semi-structured interview guide.

Semi-structured interviews were selected because they provide flexibility while ensuring that all participants address the central phenomenon under investigation. The interview guide consisted primarily of open-ended questions designed to encourage participants to share detailed narratives, reflections, and personal meanings associated with their experiences.

The interview guide consisted of four major sections.

Part I. Professional Background

This section gathered demographic and professional information including:

- age range;
- gender;
- highest educational attainment;
- years of professional experience;
- present position;
- type of library served.

Part II. Experiences of Library Transformation

Sample questions included:

- Can you describe how your library began transforming into a community learning hub?
- What significant changes have you personally experienced during this transformation?
- What motivated these initiatives?

Part III. Challenges and Leadership Experiences

Sample questions included:

- What challenges did you encounter during the transformation process?
- How were these challenges addressed?
- What leadership practices contributed to successful implementation?

Part IV. Reflections and Aspirations

Sample questions included:

- What does being a community learning hub mean to you?
- How has this transformation influenced your professional identity?
- What advice would you offer to librarians beginning similar initiatives?
- How do you envision libraries ten years from now?

Probing questions were used whenever necessary to encourage participants to elaborate on their responses and clarify significant experiences.

Validation of the Research Instrument

Prior to data collection, the semi-structured interview guide underwent **expert validation** to establish content validity.

Three experts evaluated the instrument:

- one professor specializing in qualitative research methodology;
- one senior Library and Information Science educator;
- one experienced library administrator actively involved in community engagement programs.

The validators examined the interview questions with respect to:

- alignment with the research objectives;
- clarity of language;

- appropriateness of sequencing;
- comprehensiveness;
- relevance to phenomenological inquiry;
- potential for eliciting rich descriptions.

Suggestions provided by the validators included simplifying selected interview questions, improving transitions between sections, reducing leading statements, and incorporating additional prompts related to community partnerships and leadership experiences.

Following revisions, the interview guide was considered appropriate for implementation.

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was conducted systematically over approximately eight weeks following institutional approval and participants' informed consent.

The procedure involved several stages.

Phase 1: Securing Permissions

Formal letters requesting permission to conduct the study were submitted to the administrators of participating libraries. Upon approval, potential participants were identified with assistance from library administrators while ensuring voluntary participation.

Phase 2: Participant Recruitment

Qualified librarians received invitation letters explaining:

- the purpose of the study;
- voluntary participation;
- confidentiality measures;
- interview procedures;
- estimated interview duration;
- participants' rights.

Those who agreed signed informed consent forms before participation.

Phase 3: Conducting Interviews

Individual in-depth interviews were conducted either face-to-face or through secure online video conferencing platforms, depending on participant preference and accessibility.

Each interview lasted approximately **60 to 90 minutes**.

With participants' permission, interviews were audio-recorded to ensure accurate transcription. Field notes documenting nonverbal observations, contextual information, and emerging reflections were likewise maintained throughout data collection.

Phase 4: Transcription and Member Checking

Audio recordings were transcribed verbatim immediately after each interview.

Participants subsequently reviewed their transcripts through a **member-checking** process to verify the accuracy of recorded information and provide clarifications where necessary.

Only verified transcripts were included in the final analysis.

Data Analysis

Data analysis followed **Moustakas' (1994) transcendental phenomenological method**, which emphasizes describing the essence of participants' lived experiences.

The analysis involved the following procedures:

Step 1. Epoche (Bracketing)

The researcher consciously suspended personal assumptions and prior knowledge regarding library transformation to approach participants' narratives with openness.

Step 2. Horizontalization

Each significant statement within the interview transcripts was treated with equal value during initial coding.

Step 3. Meaning Units

Significant statements were clustered into meaningful units representing common experiences.

Step 4. Thematic Clustering

Related meaning units were synthesized into broader themes reflecting shared patterns across participants.

Step 5. Textural Description

Detailed descriptions of **what** participants experienced were developed using verbatim quotations and narrative summaries.

Step 6. Structural Description

Descriptions of **how** participants experienced the phenomenon were constructed by examining contextual factors influencing their experiences.

Step 7. Essence of the Phenomenon

Finally, the researcher synthesized the textural and structural descriptions to articulate the fundamental essence of librarians' lived experiences in transforming libraries into community learning hubs.

The analysis was iterative, requiring repeated review of transcripts to ensure that the emergent themes faithfully represented participants' experiences.

Trustworthiness of the Study

To ensure the rigor and quality of this qualitative investigation, the study adopted the trustworthiness criteria proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985), namely credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. These criteria were systematically observed throughout the research process to enhance the authenticity, consistency, and trustworthiness of the findings.

Credibility

Credibility refers to the confidence that can be placed in the truthfulness of the participants' accounts and the accuracy of the research findings. Several strategies were employed to strengthen the credibility of this study.

First, prolonged engagement with participants allowed the researcher to establish rapport and create a comfortable environment that encouraged honest and reflective sharing of experiences. Each interview lasted approximately 60 to 90 minutes, allowing participants sufficient time to elaborate on their personal experiences, insights, and reflections regarding the transformation of their libraries into community learning hubs.

Second, **member checking** was conducted following transcription. Each participant received a copy of his or her interview transcript and was invited to review the document for accuracy, completeness, and faithful representation of intended meanings. Participants were likewise given opportunities to clarify statements or provide additional information whenever necessary.

Third, the researcher employed probing questions and follow-up interviews whenever clarification was needed to deepen understanding of participants' experiences and minimize misinterpretation.

Finally, peer debriefing was undertaken with experienced qualitative researchers and Library and Information Science scholars who reviewed portions of the coding process and thematic interpretations. Their feedback contributed to refining the analysis while reducing researcher bias.

Transferability

Transferability refers to the extent to which the findings may be applicable or meaningful in contexts similar to those examined in the study.

Rather than seeking statistical generalization, this phenomenological inquiry provides **rich, thick descriptions** of the participants, research setting, data collection procedures, contextual factors, and emergent themes. These detailed descriptions enable readers and future researchers to determine the relevance and applicability of the findings to their own institutional or professional contexts.

Although the study focused on selected public, academic, and community libraries in Central Luzon, the experiences described by the participants may offer valuable insights to librarians, administrators, educators, and policymakers working in comparable environments undergoing organizational transformation.

Dependability

Dependability refers to the stability, consistency, and transparency of the research process over time.

To establish dependability, the researcher maintained a comprehensive **audit trail** documenting every stage of the investigation. This included records of research planning, participant recruitment, interview schedules, field notes, transcription procedures, coding decisions, theme development, and methodological reflections.

The interview guide was consistently used across all participants while allowing sufficient flexibility for participants to elaborate on unique experiences. Any modifications to interview prompts were documented together with the rationale for such adjustments.

Furthermore, qualitative research experts reviewed the methodological procedures to ensure consistency between the research questions, data collection methods, analytical procedures, and resulting interpretations.

Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the degree to which the findings are grounded in participants' experiences rather than influenced by researcher preferences or assumptions.

To promote confirmability, the researcher practiced **reflexive journaling** throughout the research process. Personal reflections, methodological decisions, emerging interpretations, and potential biases were recorded regularly to facilitate critical self-awareness during data collection and analysis.

Bracketing (epoche) was likewise employed to consciously suspend preconceived beliefs regarding library transformation, thereby allowing participants' narratives to emerge naturally.

Additionally, the use of verbatim quotations throughout the presentation of findings provided direct evidence supporting thematic interpretations and enabled readers to evaluate the authenticity of the conclusions. Collectively, these procedures strengthened the transparency, neutrality, and integrity of the research findings.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to established ethical principles governing qualitative research involving human participants. Throughout the conduct of the investigation, the researcher observed the principles of respect for persons, beneficence, non-maleficence, justice, confidentiality, and voluntary participation to protect the rights, dignity, and welfare of all participants.

Informed Consent

Prior to participation, each prospective participant received a written explanation describing the purpose of the study, research procedures, anticipated duration of the interviews, potential benefits and minimal risks, confidentiality measures, and participants' rights.

Participants were informed that their involvement was entirely voluntary and that they could decline participation or withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or adverse consequences. Only those who voluntarily signed the informed consent form were included in the study.

Voluntary Participation

Participation in the study was entirely voluntary. No participant received compensation, incentives, or any form of coercion to participate.

Participants retained full autonomy regarding the extent of information they wished to disclose and were free to refuse answering any interview question that caused discomfort or concern.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

To safeguard participants' identities, pseudonyms such as **Participant 1**, **Participant 2**, and so forth were used throughout the study.

Similarly, the names of participating libraries, institutions, municipalities, and cities were withheld from all research documents and publications unless explicit permission was granted.

Only the researcher had access to the master list linking participants' identities with their assigned pseudonyms.

Privacy During Interviews

Interviews were conducted in locations or virtual environments selected by the participants to ensure privacy, comfort, and confidentiality.

Only the participant and the researcher were present during each interview unless the participant requested otherwise.

All interviews were conducted respectfully, allowing participants to speak freely without interruption or judgment.

Data Security

Digital audio recordings, interview transcripts, field notes, and consent forms were securely stored using password-protected electronic devices and encrypted digital storage.

Printed documents were kept in locked storage accessible only to the researchers.

Research data will be retained for the period required by institutional research policies and will thereafter be permanently destroyed through secure deletion of electronic files and shredding of printed documents.

Minimization of Risk

The study involved minimal foreseeable risk.

Because participants were invited to reflect on professional experiences rather than sensitive personal matters, no significant psychological, physical, social, legal, or economic risks were anticipated.

Nevertheless, participants were informed that they could pause or terminate the interview whenever they wished if they experienced any discomfort.

Integrity of the Research Process

The researchers committed to maintaining honesty, transparency, and academic integrity throughout the investigation.

No data were fabricated, altered, omitted, or selectively reported. Findings were presented faithfully according to participants' narratives while acknowledging the limitations inherent in qualitative inquiry.

All scholarly works consulted during manuscript preparation were properly acknowledged following the guidelines of the American Psychological Association (APA) 7th Edition.

Researcher Reflexivity

Researcher reflexivity constitutes an essential component of phenomenological inquiry because researchers inevitably bring prior experiences, professional knowledge, and personal assumptions into the research process. The researcher recognizes a professional interest in the continuing transformation of libraries and acknowledges an appreciation for community-centered librarianship as an emerging direction within Library and Information Science. Such perspectives, if left unexamined, could unintentionally influence data collection, interpretation, and thematic development.

To minimize these influences, the researcher practiced epoche or bracketing before and throughout the investigation by consciously setting aside personal beliefs regarding successful library transformation. Reflexive journals were maintained to document evolving assumptions, methodological decisions, emotional responses, and interpretive reflections encountered during each stage of the research.

The researchers likewise remained attentive to participants' own meanings rather than imposing predetermined interpretations. Throughout data analysis, interview transcripts were revisited repeatedly to ensure that emerging themes remained grounded in participants' actual narratives rather than researcher expectations.

Regular peer consultations with qualitative research scholars further strengthened reflexive practice by encouraging critical examination of coding decisions, thematic interpretations, and methodological consistency.

By engaging in continuous self-reflection and methodological transparency, the researcher sought to faithfully represent the lived experiences of librarians while preserving the authenticity and credibility of the phenomenological investigation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Following Moustakas' (1994) transcendental phenomenological method, the analysis of the twelve interview transcripts yielded **six interrelated themes** that collectively describe the lived experiences of librarians in transforming traditional libraries into community learning hubs. These themes capture participants' motivations, challenges, leadership practices, collaborative efforts, and aspirations as they redefined the role of libraries in response to evolving community needs.

Prior to presenting the thematic findings, a brief profile of the participants is provided to contextualize their experiences. The subsequent sections present each emergent theme, supported by representative verbatim quotations and interpretive discussions, culminating in a composite description and the essence of the phenomenon.

Profile of the Participants

The study involved twelve (12) licensed librarians purposively selected from public, academic, and community libraries in Central Luzon, Philippines. Participants possessed between 10 and 35 years of professional experience, enabling them to provide rich narratives regarding organizational transformation, community engagement, and innovative library practices.

The participants represented diverse leadership and professional positions, including library directors, chief librarians, university librarians, public librarians, community librarians, and library program coordinators. Several had supervised digital transformation initiatives, while others had spearheaded literacy programs, community outreach projects, makerspaces, digital inclusion campaigns, and partnerships with schools, local government units, and non-government organizations.

To ensure confidentiality, participants were assigned pseudonyms (Participant 1 through Participant 12) throughout the presentation of findings.

Although participants worked in different institutional settings, they shared a common experience of leading or actively participating in transforming their libraries from traditional information centers into dynamic community learning hubs.

Theme 1

Redefining the Purpose of Libraries

One of the most prominent themes emerging from the interviews was librarians' evolving understanding of the purpose of libraries. Participants consistently described a shift from viewing libraries primarily as repositories of books toward recognizing them as vibrant learning environments that respond to the changing educational, technological, and social needs of their communities.

Participants explained that declining circulation of printed books did not signify the diminishing importance of libraries. Rather, it challenged librarians to rethink how libraries could remain relevant in people's everyday lives. Participant 4 reflected:

"There was a time when we measured success by how many books we acquired. Today, we ask ourselves how many lives we have touched."

Participant 8 similarly shared:

"The library is no longer simply a place where people borrow books. It has become a place where people learn new skills, meet others, exchange ideas, and grow together."

Several participants emphasized that the transformation required changing long-held assumptions about library services. Instead of waiting for patrons to visit, librarians began designing programs that actively engaged different sectors of the community.

Participant 2 explained:

"Our mindset changed. Instead of asking how people could use the library, we started asking how the library could serve people where they are."

Many participants described this realization as the turning point that fundamentally reshaped their professional practice.

The findings suggest that librarians perceive organizational transformation as beginning with a transformation in professional philosophy rather than physical infrastructure. Participants no longer defined libraries by collections, shelving systems, or circulation statistics. Instead, they viewed libraries as institutions that facilitate learning, collaboration, creativity, inclusion, and community empowerment.

This evolving perspective demonstrates that successful transformation requires librarians to redefine institutional purpose before implementing new services or technologies.

Theme 2

Listening Before Leading

Participants consistently emphasized that successful transformation did not begin with ambitious projects or expensive technologies but with understanding the genuine needs of their communities.

Rather than assuming what patrons wanted, librarians intentionally sought community input through consultations, surveys, informal conversations, focus group discussions, and collaborative planning sessions.

Participant 6 shared:

"We realized that we could not transform the library without first listening to the people we wanted to serve."

Participant 11 recalled:

"When we asked residents what they needed, many did not ask for more books. They asked for computer classes, internet access, job-seeking assistance, and spaces where children could study safely after school."

Participants described community engagement as an ongoing dialogue rather than a one-time activity. Programs evolved continuously based on changing community needs.

One participant explained:

"Every program we introduced came from listening. The community became our greatest teacher." (Participant 5)

These narratives reveal that librarians increasingly embrace participatory leadership approaches characterized by collaboration, responsiveness, and shared decision-making. Community needs assessments became essential foundations for innovation, enabling libraries to develop relevant and sustainable services.

The findings further demonstrate that librarians increasingly regard communities not merely as library users but as active partners in shaping library services.

Theme 3

Creating Spaces Where Everyone Belongs

Participants repeatedly described libraries as inclusive environments where individuals from diverse backgrounds could access learning opportunities without discrimination.

Several participants emphasized that community learning hubs intentionally welcomed children, students, senior citizens, unemployed adults, persons with disabilities, entrepreneurs, indigenous peoples, and other marginalized sectors.

Participant 1 explained:

"Our goal was not simply to invite people into the building. Our goal was to make everyone feel that they truly belonged."

Participant 9 reflected:

"Some visitors came to borrow books. Others came because they needed internet access. Some simply wanted a quiet and safe place where someone cared enough to help them."

Participants highlighted numerous inclusive programs including:

- digital literacy workshops;
- storytelling sessions;
- financial literacy seminars;
- livelihood training;

- research consultations;
- makerspaces;
- assistive technology services;
- senior citizen learning circles; and
- youth leadership activities.

These initiatives significantly expanded the role of libraries within their communities.

The findings demonstrate that inclusivity has become a defining characteristic of community learning hubs. Libraries increasingly function as social institutions that reduce educational inequities, strengthen social cohesion, and promote lifelong learning opportunities for diverse populations.

Participants consistently viewed accessibility not merely as physical access but also as ensuring that every individual feels respected, supported, and empowered to learn.

Theme 4

Embracing Innovation While Preserving Identity

Participants acknowledged that digital technologies have transformed nearly every aspect of library operations. Nevertheless, they consistently emphasized that innovation should strengthen—not replace—the fundamental values of librarianship.

Many participants described introducing online catalogs, institutional repositories, digital collections, virtual reference services, artificial intelligence applications, makerspaces, and online learning platforms.

Participant 7 observed:

"Technology changed our tools, but it never changed our purpose."

Participant 3 added:

"People sometimes believe technology will replace librarians. We see technology as helping us reach more learners while continuing to provide human guidance."

Several participants discussed initial uncertainty when implementing technological innovations. However, they explained that continuous professional development and organizational support gradually increased their confidence.

Participant 10 reflected:

"Learning never stopped. Every new technology became another opportunity to serve our community better."

Participants perceived innovation as a means of expanding educational access rather than replacing traditional library values. Their narratives illustrate that successful transformation requires balancing technological advancement with ethical service, professional expertise, and meaningful human interaction.

Innovation, therefore, was viewed as a process of enhancing—not abandoning—the profession's enduring commitment to equitable access to knowledge.

Theme 5

Partnerships as Catalysts for Transformation

Participants unanimously described partnerships as indispensable to the successful transformation of libraries into community learning hubs. Limited budgets, staffing constraints, and increasing community demands prompted librarians to collaborate with various organizations.

Partnerships included:

- local government units;
- public and private schools;
- colleges and universities;
- non-government organizations;
- cultural institutions;
- literacy advocates;
- local businesses;
- volunteer organizations; and
- community associations.

Participant 12 shared:

"Our biggest innovation was realizing that we did not have to work alone."

Participant 8 explained:

"Every partnership expanded what the library could offer. Together, we created opportunities that would have been impossible if we worked independently."

Collaborative initiatives included mobile libraries, reading festivals, digital literacy campaigns, environmental education programs, research workshops, entrepreneurship seminars, health information sessions, and heritage preservation projects.

These findings indicate that organizational transformation is strengthened through collaborative leadership and shared responsibility. Libraries increasingly function as community conveners that bring together diverse stakeholders to address educational and social needs.

Participants regarded partnerships not simply as resource-sharing arrangements but as long-term relationships built upon mutual trust, shared vision, and collective commitment to community development.

Theme 6

Sustaining Community-Centered Libraries Through Visionary Leadership

The final theme captures participants' reflections on sustaining transformation over time. While launching innovative programs was important, participants emphasized that maintaining momentum required visionary leadership, continuous learning, institutional commitment, and adaptability.

Participant 6 reflected:

"Transformation is not a project with an ending date. It becomes part of the library's identity."

Participant 5 explained:

"Every year our community changes. If libraries stop learning, they stop serving."

Participants emphasized several qualities necessary for sustaining community-centered libraries:

- visionary leadership;
- lifelong professional learning;
- adaptability;
- evidence-based planning;
- staff empowerment;
- continuous community engagement; and
- organizational resilience.

Many participants likewise stressed the importance of mentoring younger librarians who would continue leading future innovations.

Participant 2 concluded:

"Our greatest achievement is not the programs we created but the future librarians who will continue improving them."

The findings demonstrate that sustainable transformation depends upon institutional culture rather than isolated projects. Participants consistently viewed leadership as a continuous process of inspiring innovation, nurturing collaboration, and maintaining responsiveness to changing community needs.

Rather than viewing transformation as complete, librarians perceived community learning hubs as continuously evolving institutions committed to lifelong learning, inclusivity, and public service.

These six themes collectively illustrate that transforming libraries into community learning hubs is a multidimensional process involving shifts in professional identity, participatory leadership, inclusive programming, technological innovation, collaborative partnerships, and sustainable leadership practices.

Composite Textural Description (What the Participants Experienced)

The participants described their experiences as a continuous journey of transformation in which libraries gradually evolved from traditional repositories of books into vibrant centers of learning, collaboration, and community engagement. Throughout this journey, they experienced changing community expectations, technological advancements, organizational restructuring, resource limitations, and shifting professional responsibilities.

Many participants recalled that the earliest stages of transformation began with a realization that traditional library services were no longer sufficient to address the increasingly diverse needs of their communities. Declining visits for conventional library services prompted them to rethink their roles and actively seek new ways of engaging learners of all ages. Rather than remaining passive providers of information, participants became planners, educators, facilitators, advocates, and collaborators.

Participants recounted organizing literacy campaigns, digital skills workshops, makerspaces, research consultations, storytelling sessions, financial literacy seminars, cultural heritage programs, entrepreneurship training, and outreach services that extended library resources beyond the physical building. They described the satisfaction of witnessing children discover the joy of reading, adults acquire new digital competencies, students receive academic support, and marginalized community members gain access to educational opportunities previously unavailable to them.

Although participants acknowledged numerous challenges—including limited funding, inadequate staffing, resistance to organizational change, rapidly evolving technologies, and increasing community expectations—they consistently viewed these obstacles as opportunities for creativity, collaboration, and professional growth. Partnerships with schools, government agencies, universities, non-government organizations, businesses, and volunteers became essential in expanding services and sustaining innovative programs.

Across all interviews, participants expressed deep pride in witnessing their libraries become welcoming, inclusive spaces where individuals from different ages, backgrounds, and abilities could learn, interact, and grow together. For many participants, the most rewarding aspect of their work was not managing collections but observing the positive impact that library programs had on people's lives and communities.

Composite Structural Description (How the Participants Experienced the Phenomenon)

Participants experienced the transformation of libraries through an ongoing process of adaptation, reflection, collaboration, and leadership. This transformation did not occur through isolated projects or technological upgrades alone but emerged gradually as librarians responded to changing societal needs and embraced broader conceptions of their professional roles.

The process typically began with careful observation of declining traditional library usage and increasing community demands for more diverse educational and technological services. Rather than interpreting these developments as threats, participants viewed them as invitations to reimagine the library's purpose.

Transformation was facilitated through continuous dialogue with community members, strategic planning, collaborative partnerships, and ongoing professional development. Participants emphasized that meaningful innovation required understanding local needs before introducing new programs or technologies. Listening became an essential leadership practice that guided decision-making throughout the transformation process.

Technological innovations—including integrated library systems, digital repositories, virtual reference services, online learning platforms, and makerspaces—were experienced not as replacements for librarians but as tools that enhanced access to knowledge and expanded educational opportunities. Participants consistently balanced innovation with the enduring professional values of librarianship, including equitable access to information, intellectual freedom, lifelong learning, and public service.

Participants also described organizational transformation as a collective endeavor requiring trust, shared leadership, institutional support, and sustained collaboration among staff members and external partners. Through these experiences, librarians gradually developed stronger professional identities characterized by adaptability, resilience, innovation, and community leadership.

Ultimately, participants experienced transformation as a continuing journey rather than a destination. Each successful initiative generated new opportunities for learning, partnership, and community engagement, reinforcing their commitment to responsive and sustainable library services.

Essence of the Phenomenon

The essence of the lived experiences of librarians in transforming libraries into community learning hubs is characterized by purposeful transformation grounded in service, collaboration, and lifelong learning.

For the participants, transforming libraries was never merely about modernizing facilities, acquiring digital technologies, or introducing new programs. Rather, it represented a profound redefinition of librarianship itself—from managing collections to empowering communities. They came to understand that the true strength of libraries lies not in the resources they possess but in the meaningful opportunities they create for individuals to learn, connect, innovate, and thrive.

Participants consistently viewed themselves as catalysts for positive community change. Through adaptive leadership, collaborative partnerships, inclusive programming, and continuous professional learning, they transformed libraries into welcoming environments where knowledge, creativity, and social engagement flourish. Their experiences reveal that successful transformation depends less on technological sophistication than on a steadfast commitment to understanding and responding to the evolving needs of the people they serve.

Ultimately, the phenomenon is best understood as a journey of professional and institutional renewal. Libraries become community learning hubs when librarians embrace change with vision, compassion, and innovation while remaining faithful to the enduring values of librarianship. In doing so, they ensure that libraries continue to serve as accessible, inclusive, and empowering spaces that enrich lives and strengthen communities across generations.

Conclusions

The findings of this phenomenological study demonstrate that the transformation of libraries into community learning hubs is a multidimensional process that extends beyond physical renovation or technological modernization. At its core, the transformation reflects a shift in philosophy—from viewing libraries primarily as repositories of information to recognizing them as dynamic institutions that foster lifelong learning, social inclusion, collaboration, and community empowerment.

The participants' lived experiences revealed that meaningful transformation begins with a redefinition of the library's purpose. Librarians recognized that changing community needs, advances in technology, and evolving patterns of information use required innovative and responsive services. By actively listening to their communities, they developed programs and initiatives that addressed local educational, cultural, technological, and social needs.

The study further highlights that successful transformation is sustained through participatory leadership, strategic partnerships, and a commitment to continuous professional learning. Participants consistently emphasized that collaboration with schools, government agencies, community organizations, and other stakeholders enabled libraries to extend their reach and maximize their impact despite limited resources.

Another significant finding is that technological innovation was viewed as an enabler rather than a replacement for librarianship. Participants embraced digital tools and emerging technologies while preserving the profession's enduring values of equitable access to information, intellectual freedom, ethical stewardship, and personalized service. Moreover, the participants' narratives illustrate the evolving professional identity of librarians. They increasingly perceived themselves as educators, facilitators, innovators, advocates, mentors, and community leaders who contribute directly to individual and societal development. This expanded role reinforces the importance of adaptive leadership and lifelong learning in ensuring the continued relevance of libraries.

Overall, the study concludes that libraries successfully become community learning hubs when they cultivate inclusive environments, prioritize community engagement, foster collaborative partnerships, embrace innovation responsibly, and remain firmly grounded in the human-centered values that have long defined the profession.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

For Librarians

Librarians may continue strengthening their competencies in community engagement, digital literacy instruction, program development, partnership building, and transformational leadership. Continuous professional development will enable them to respond effectively to evolving educational and technological landscapes while preserving the core values of librarianship.

For Library Administrators

Library administrators may adopt strategic planning approaches that prioritize community participation, inclusive programming, innovation, and sustainable service development. Organizational support for staff training, collaborative initiatives, and evidence-based decision-making may further strengthen libraries as community learning hubs.

For Library and Information Science Educators

Higher education institutions offering Library and Information Science programs may incorporate community-centered librarianship, participatory leadership, project management, partnership development, and digital innovation into their curricula. Experiential learning opportunities may likewise prepare future librarians for their expanding professional roles.

For Government Agencies

National and local government agencies responsible for library development may continue investing in library modernization, digital infrastructure, community outreach initiatives, and professional capacity-building programs. Policies that promote equitable access to information and lifelong learning may further enhance the societal contributions of libraries.

For Community Organizations

Schools, non-government organizations, cultural institutions, businesses, and civic organizations may strengthen collaborative partnerships with libraries in designing responsive educational, cultural, technological, and social programs that address local community needs.

For Future Researchers

Future qualitative studies may explore the perspectives of library users, volunteers, community partners, educators, policymakers, and emerging librarians regarding community-centered library services. Comparative studies involving different countries or library systems may likewise provide broader insights into sustainable library transformation.

Implications of the Study

The findings of this phenomenological study offer significant implications for the theory and practice of Library and Information Science, particularly in the context of libraries' evolving roles as community learning hubs.

Implications for Library Practice

The study demonstrates that contemporary libraries can no longer be evaluated solely by the size of their collections, circulation statistics, or physical infrastructure. Instead, their effectiveness increasingly depends on their ability to respond to community needs through relevant educational programs, inclusive services, collaborative partnerships, and innovative learning opportunities.

The participants' experiences suggest that successful library transformation begins with understanding the aspirations and needs of the communities being served. Consequently, libraries should continuously conduct community needs assessments, engage stakeholders in planning processes, and evaluate programs based on their social and educational impact rather than solely on traditional performance indicators.

Furthermore, the findings reinforce the importance of positioning librarians as community educators, facilitators, and innovators rather than merely custodians of information resources. This expanded professional role requires continuous learning, adaptive leadership, and a willingness to embrace emerging technologies while maintaining the profession's enduring commitment to equitable access to information and lifelong learning.

Implications for Library Leadership

The study underscores that organizational transformation is fundamentally a leadership endeavor. Participants consistently described successful transformation as a product of visionary leadership that encourages innovation, empowers staff, cultivates collaboration, and remains responsive to changing community needs.

Library leaders are therefore encouraged to foster organizational cultures that value experimentation, shared decision-making, reflective practice, and continuous improvement. Rather than relying exclusively on hierarchical management structures, administrators may benefit from adopting participatory leadership approaches that actively involve librarians, community partners, volunteers, and users in shaping library services.

Leadership development programs focusing on change management, strategic planning, community engagement, and partnership building may likewise strengthen the capacity of future library leaders.

Implications for Library and Information Science Education

The findings indicate that the competencies required of contemporary librarians extend well beyond traditional cataloging, collection development, and reference services.

Library and Information Science (LIS) programs may therefore consider strengthening curricular offerings related to:

- community engagement and outreach;
- digital literacy instruction;
- project planning and management;
- partnership development;
- grant writing and resource mobilization;
- program evaluation;
- leadership and organizational development;
- advocacy and public communication;
- emerging technologies and artificial intelligence applications.

Providing students with experiential learning opportunities through service-learning, internships, and community-based projects may better prepare future librarians for their expanding professional responsibilities.

Implications for Public Policy

The study highlights the strategic role of libraries in advancing national and local development priorities, including lifelong learning, digital inclusion, literacy promotion, workforce development, cultural preservation, and civic participation.

Government agencies responsible for education, culture, and local governance may consider recognizing libraries as essential community development institutions deserving sustained investment.

Policy initiatives may include:

- modernization of library infrastructure;
- expansion of internet connectivity;
- support for makerspaces and innovation laboratories;
- increased funding for community outreach programs;
- continuous professional development for librarians;
- incentives for collaborative partnerships between libraries and community organizations.

Such investments may enhance libraries' contributions to inclusive education and sustainable community development.

Implications for Community Development

The participants' experiences illustrate that libraries possess tremendous potential to strengthen communities beyond their traditional educational functions.

By serving as accessible venues for lifelong learning, civic dialogue, digital inclusion, entrepreneurship, cultural activities, and collaborative problem-solving, libraries contribute directly to community resilience and social cohesion. The study therefore reinforces the importance of viewing libraries not merely as educational institutions but as community assets capable of supporting local development across multiple sectors.

Implications for Future Research

The findings provide numerous opportunities for further investigation.

Future studies may explore:

- users' lived experiences within community learning hubs;
- comparative analyses of public, academic, school, and special libraries;
- organizational cultures supporting successful library transformation;
- digital inclusion initiatives in rural and underserved communities;
- artificial intelligence integration within community libraries;
- community perceptions regarding the social impact of transformed libraries;
- quantitative validation of the proposed framework developed in this study.

Longitudinal investigations may likewise examine how community learning hubs continue evolving over time in response to emerging technologies, demographic changes, and educational reforms.

Proposed Framework

Community Learning Hub Transformation Framework (CLHTF)

Based on the lived experiences of the participants, this study proposes the Community Learning Hub Transformation Framework (CLHTF). The framework synthesizes the essential elements that enable libraries to evolve into responsive, inclusive, and sustainable community learning hubs.

The framework is composed of five interconnected dimensions, each representing a critical component of successful transformation.

Dimension 1. Understanding Community Needs

Transformation begins with developing a deep understanding of the community served.

This dimension emphasizes:

- community consultations;
- stakeholder engagement;
- needs assessment;
- environmental scanning;
- evidence-based planning.

Rather than assuming community needs, librarians actively listen, observe, and collaborate with community members before designing services.

Guiding Principle:

"Communities should shape libraries—not the other way around."

Dimension 2. Transformational Library Leadership

Effective transformation requires visionary leadership capable of inspiring innovation while preserving the profession's enduring values.

Key leadership competencies include:

- strategic planning;
- participatory leadership;
- innovation management;
- adaptive decision-making;
- staff empowerment;
- continuous improvement.

The librarian functions not only as an information professional but also as a community leader and change agent.

Dimension 3. Community-Centered Library Innovations

Guided by community needs and effective leadership, libraries implement diverse learning opportunities, including:

- digital literacy programs;
- makerspaces;
- reading promotion initiatives;
- research support services;
- entrepreneurship training;
- financial literacy education;
- cultural heritage programs;
- lifelong learning workshops;
- technology access services;

- youth and senior citizen programs.

Innovation remains responsive to local priorities rather than driven solely by technological trends.

Dimension 4. Collaborative Partnerships

Transformation becomes sustainable through strong partnerships involving:

- schools;
- higher education institutions;
- local government units;
- cultural organizations;
- non-government organizations;
- businesses;
- volunteers;
- community leaders;
- professional associations.

Partnerships enable resource sharing, expanded expertise, broader community reach, and long-term sustainability.

Dimension 5. Sustainable Community Impact

Successful transformation ultimately produces:

- increased lifelong learning participation;
- improved digital literacy;
- stronger community engagement;
- equitable access to information;
- inclusive educational opportunities;
- strengthened social cohesion;
- resilient and future-ready libraries.

These outcomes reinforce the continuing relevance of libraries within rapidly changing societies.

Visual Representation of the CLHTF



Theoretical Proposition

Drawing from the participants' lived experiences, the study advances the following theoretical proposition:

Libraries become sustainable community learning hubs when librarians intentionally integrate community-responsive leadership, collaborative partnerships, inclusive innovation, and lifelong learning into the core philosophy of library services. Organizational transformation is sustained not by technology alone but by meaningful relationships, adaptive leadership, and an enduring commitment to community empowerment.

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The future of librarianship: Library and Information Science students' perspectives on career opportunities, professional challenges, and global possibilities

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Abstract

Aim: The rapid advancement of digital technologies, artificial intelligence, data-driven information systems, and global knowledge economies has transformed the landscape of librarianship. Contemporary librarians are no longer confined to managing print collections but increasingly serve as information specialists, digital curators, research consultants, knowledge managers, data stewards, educators, and technology facilitators across diverse professional environments. Despite these expanding career opportunities, misconceptions about librarianship continue to influence enrollment in Library and Information Science (LIS) programs, particularly among prospective students. This qualitative phenomenological study explored the perspectives of Library and Information Science students regarding career opportunities, professional challenges, global possibilities, and the support needed to prepare for the future of the profession.

Methodology: Using purposive sampling, fifteen undergraduate LIS students from selected higher education institutions in the Philippines participated in semi-structured interviews. Data were analyzed using Moustakas' transcendental phenomenological approach.

Results: Analysis generated six major themes: (1) discovering librarianship beyond traditional stereotypes; (2) embracing a profession shaped by technology and innovation; (3) envisioning diverse local and global career pathways; (4) confronting misconceptions and professional challenges; (5) recognizing the competencies required for future-ready librarianship; and (6) aspiring to become globally competitive information professionals. The findings reveal that students increasingly perceive librarianship as a dynamic profession with expanding opportunities across education, government, healthcare, business, archives, museums, information technology, research, and international organizations. However, participants likewise identified persistent challenges, including limited public awareness, evolving technological demands, and the need for stronger institutional and professional support.

Conclusion: Based on the findings, the study proposes the Future Librarian Career Readiness Framework (FLCRF) to guide higher education institutions, professional organizations, and policymakers in preparing globally competent library and information professionals.

Keywords: *librarianship, Library and Information Science, career aspirations, phenomenology, future librarians, global careers, professional development*

INTRODUCTION

The profession of librarianship has experienced remarkable transformation during the past several decades. Traditionally associated with organizing books, maintaining library collections, and assisting patrons in locating printed materials, librarians today perform significantly broader responsibilities within increasingly complex information environments. The rapid expansion of digital technologies, cloud computing, artificial intelligence, big data, digital scholarship, open science, and knowledge management has fundamentally redefined the nature of library and information services worldwide.

Libraries themselves have likewise evolved. Modern libraries function as centers for digital learning, research support, innovation, community engagement, cultural preservation, data management, and collaborative knowledge creation (Onunka et al., 2023). Consequently, librarians have assumed expanded professional roles that extend beyond conventional library settings into education, healthcare, government, corporate organizations, museums, archives, legal institutions, media organizations, international agencies, and technology companies.

Within the Philippines, the Library and Information Science profession continues to play an increasingly important role in supporting educational quality, research productivity, digital transformation, cultural heritage preservation, lifelong learning, and equitable access to information. The enactment of the Philippine Librarianship Act of 2003 (Republic Act No. 9246) strengthened professional standards by requiring licensure for librarians and recognizing librarianship as a regulated profession. Philippine universities continue producing licensed librarians who serve in public libraries, academic institutions, school libraries, government agencies, private organizations, archives, and specialized information centers.

Beyond national boundaries, globalization has created new opportunities for Filipino librarians. Their competencies in information organization, digital resource management, research support, records management, metadata creation, knowledge organization, instructional services, and information literacy have become increasingly valuable within international organizations, multinational corporations, global universities, digital repositories, and remote information services. Advances in virtual work environments further enable information professionals to contribute beyond geographical limitations.

Despite these expanding opportunities, misconceptions regarding librarianship remain widespread. Many students continue associating the profession exclusively with shelving books, maintaining silence in libraries, or performing routine clerical tasks. Such perceptions often overshadow the intellectually demanding, technology-driven, and interdisciplinary nature of contemporary librarianship. Consequently, Library and Information Science programs frequently experience challenges in attracting prospective students despite growing workforce demands.

The future sustainability of the profession depends largely upon understanding how current Library and Information Science students perceive their chosen career. Their perspectives regarding opportunities, challenges, professional identity, and global possibilities provide valuable insights for educators, professional organizations, policymakers, and industry leaders seeking to strengthen the profession and prepare graduates for rapidly evolving information ecosystems.

Although previous studies have examined job satisfaction, employability, technological competencies, and professional development among practicing librarians, relatively few qualitative investigations have explored how students themselves envision the future of librarianship. Understanding these perspectives is particularly important because today's students represent the next generation of information professionals who will shape the future of libraries, archives, knowledge institutions, and digital information services.

This phenomenological study therefore seeks to explore the lived perspectives of Library and Information Science students regarding the future of librarianship. By examining their aspirations, expectations, perceived opportunities, anticipated challenges, and support needs, the study contributes to the growing discourse on future-ready librarianship while providing practical recommendations for strengthening Library and Information Science education and workforce development.

Ultimately, this study recognizes that the future of librarianship will not be determined solely by technological innovation but by the preparedness, adaptability, and vision of the students who choose to pursue the profession.

Review Of Related Literature

Evolution of the Library and Information Science Profession

The Library and Information Science profession has evolved from a discipline primarily concerned with organizing printed collections into one that manages complex information ecosystems. Contemporary librarians increasingly perform roles involving digital curation, research data management, scholarly communication, information architecture, digital preservation, knowledge organization, artificial intelligence applications, and information governance.

This transformation reflects the growing recognition that information professionals contribute significantly to education, research, innovation, organizational knowledge management, and evidence-based decision-making.

Career Opportunities for Library and Information Science Graduates

Graduates of Library and Information Science programs now pursue careers across diverse sectors beyond conventional libraries.

Professional opportunities include:

- academic librarianship;
- public librarianship;
- school librarianship;
- special libraries;
- medical libraries;
- legal information centers;
- government agencies;
- museums and archives;
- digital repositories;
- records and archives management;
- corporate knowledge management;
- research support services;
- publishing;
- information technology companies;
- metadata and digital asset management;
- data stewardship;
- information consulting;
- international organizations.

The expanding diversity of employment opportunities demonstrates the interdisciplinary nature of contemporary librarianship.

Globalization and International Mobility

Globalization has expanded professional mobility for information professionals. International universities, multinational corporations, global research organizations, and digital service providers increasingly seek professionals with competencies in information organization, digital resource management, metadata standards, research support, and knowledge management.

Remote work opportunities have likewise enabled librarians to contribute to international projects involving digital archives, scholarly publishing, systematic reviews, institutional repositories, and online information services. For Filipino librarians, globalization presents opportunities for professional advancement while simultaneously requiring internationally competitive competencies.

Emerging Competencies for Future Librarians

The competencies expected of future librarians continue expanding alongside technological innovation.

Professional organizations increasingly emphasize competencies related to:

- artificial intelligence;
- digital literacy;
- research data management;
- cybersecurity awareness;
- information ethics;
- project management;
- leadership;
- instructional design;
- digital preservation;
- user experience design;
- data analytics;
- scholarly communication;
- interdisciplinary collaboration.

Future librarians are expected to combine technological proficiency with critical thinking, communication skills, ethical judgment, adaptability, and lifelong learning.

Challenges Facing the Profession

Despite significant opportunities, librarianship continues facing several challenges.

These include:

- persistent misconceptions regarding professional roles;
- declining awareness of Library and Information Science programs;
- rapid technological changes;
- workforce shortages in certain sectors;
- budgetary constraints;
- increasing expectations for digital services;
- balancing technological innovation with human-centered service.

Addressing these challenges requires stronger advocacy, professional promotion, curriculum innovation, and institutional support.

Career Development Among University Students

Career aspirations develop through interactions among personal interests, educational experiences, professional exposure, mentorship, and labor market conditions.

Within Library and Information Science education, internships, field experiences, mentoring relationships, student organization involvement, and professional conferences significantly influence students' understanding of the profession.

Positive educational experiences strengthen professional identity and career confidence while preparing graduates for lifelong professional growth.

Synthesis of Literature

The literature demonstrates that librarianship is experiencing substantial transformation driven by technological innovation, globalization, interdisciplinary collaboration, and evolving societal information needs.

Although the profession offers increasingly diverse career pathways, misconceptions and limited public awareness continue affecting student recruitment and professional recognition. Existing studies predominantly focus on practicing librarians or institutional developments, leaving a notable gap in understanding how Library and Information Science students themselves perceive the future of their chosen profession. This study addresses that gap by exploring students' perspectives on career opportunities, professional challenges, global possibilities, and the support necessary to become future-ready librarians.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Donald E. Super's Life-Span, Life-Space Theory of Career Development (1990) and Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (1986), particularly the concept of Self-Efficacy. These theories provide complementary perspectives for understanding how Library and Information Science (LIS) students develop their career aspirations, perceive professional opportunities, respond to anticipated challenges, and prepare for future careers in an evolving global information environment.

Together, these theories explain that students' career choices are influenced not only by personal interests and competencies but also by their confidence, educational experiences, environmental opportunities, and expectations regarding future professional roles.

Super's Life-Span, Life-Space Theory of Career Development

Donald Super proposed that career development is a lifelong process in which individuals continually develop, refine, and implement their vocational self-concept throughout different stages of life (Model, 2022). According to the theory, career choice is not a single decision but an evolving process influenced by personal values, abilities, educational experiences, social roles, and environmental opportunities.

Super identified several developmental stages, including growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and disengagement. The participants of this study belong primarily to the exploration stage, during which individuals evaluate career alternatives, clarify occupational preferences, strengthen professional identities, and prepare for future employment.

Within Library and Information Science education, students develop their professional self-concepts through classroom learning, internships, interactions with librarians, participation in professional organizations, and exposure to emerging information technologies. As students acquire knowledge regarding librarianship, their understanding of the profession gradually expands beyond traditional stereotypes toward more diverse and globally relevant career possibilities.

The theory further suggests that career maturity develops as individuals become increasingly capable of making informed occupational decisions based on realistic assessments of their interests, competencies, opportunities, and future aspirations. This perspective is particularly relevant to the present study because it examines how Library and Information Science students perceive their future careers within rapidly changing professional environments.

Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory

Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory emphasizes that human behavior results from the dynamic interaction among personal factors, behavior, and environmental influences (Mujahidah & YUSDIANA, 2023). One of its central concepts, self-efficacy, refers to an individual's belief in his or her capability to successfully perform tasks and achieve desired goals.

Career aspirations are strongly influenced by self-efficacy. Students who believe they possess the competencies necessary to succeed in librarianship are more likely to pursue challenging opportunities, continuously develop their professional skills, and remain resilient despite obstacles.

Within Library and Information Science education, self-efficacy develops through several sources:

- mastery experiences gained through internships, practicum, and academic projects;
- observing successful librarians serving as professional role models;
- encouragement from faculty members, mentors, family, and peers;
- successful adaptation to emerging technologies and professional challenges.

The theory likewise explains why students' perceptions of career opportunities are shaped by both internal confidence and external support systems. Strong educational preparation, mentoring relationships, institutional resources, and positive professional experiences enhance students' confidence in pursuing careers locally and internationally.

Integration of the Theories

The integration of Super's Career Development Theory and Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory provides a comprehensive framework for understanding Library and Information Science students' perspectives regarding the future of librarianship.

Super's theory explains how students develop their professional identities and career aspirations, whereas Bandura's theory explains why students develop varying levels of confidence in pursuing those aspirations despite emerging opportunities and professional challenges.

Within the context of this study, students' perspectives regarding librarianship are influenced by:

- their evolving professional self-concept;
- educational experiences;
- technological competence;
- perceived employment opportunities;
- anticipated professional challenges;
- self-confidence;
- available institutional and professional support.

These interacting factors ultimately shape how students envision their future careers within both Philippine and international contexts.

The theoretical integration further suggests that preparing future librarians requires more than technical education alone. Effective preparation likewise involves strengthening professional identity, career confidence, leadership capacity, lifelong learning, technological adaptability, and global competitiveness.

Conceptual Framework

The study conceptualizes the future of librarianship as a dynamic interaction between students' educational experiences, professional aspirations, perceived opportunities, anticipated challenges, and available support systems.

The framework consists of four interconnected components.

Inputs

The first component represents the conditions influencing students' perspectives regarding librarianship.

These include:

Library and Information Science education;
internship and practicum experiences;
technological advancements;
globalization;
labor market opportunities;
faculty mentoring;
professional organizations;
family and peer influence.

These factors collectively shape students' understanding of the profession.



Lived Perspectives of Library and Information Science Students

The central phenomenon explored in this study consists of students' lived perspectives regarding:

career aspirations;
professional identity;
perceptions of librarianship;
global employment opportunities;
anticipated challenges;
professional readiness;
future expectations.



Emergent Themes

Phenomenological analysis is expected to generate themes related to:

career motivation;
professional transformation;
global competitiveness;
technological adaptation;
professional resilience;
career preparedness.



Outcome

The study culminates in the development of the
Future Librarian Career Readiness Framework (FLCRF)

The framework provides practical recommendations for preparing globally competent Library and Information Science graduates capable of succeeding within evolving information environments.

Statement of the Problem

The Library and Information Science profession continues to evolve rapidly in response to technological innovation, globalization, artificial intelligence, digital transformation, and changing societal information needs. While these developments have expanded career opportunities for librarians locally and internationally, misconceptions regarding the profession continue to influence students' career decisions and public understanding of librarianship. Moreover, limited research has explored how Library and Information Science students themselves perceive the future of their profession, including the opportunities, challenges, and support needed to prepare for successful careers.

This phenomenological study sought to explore the perspectives of Library and Information Science students regarding the future of librarianship.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions.

Central Research Question: How do Library and Information Science students perceive the future of librarianship in terms of career opportunities, professional challenges, and global possibilities?

Sub-questions

1. How do students describe their reasons for choosing Library and Information Science as their academic program?
2. How do students perceive the evolving roles of librarians in contemporary society?
3. What career opportunities do students believe are available within the Philippines?
4. What global employment opportunities do students envision for future librarians?
5. What professional challenges do students anticipate encountering after graduation?
6. What competencies do students believe future librarians should develop to remain globally competitive?
7. What forms of institutional, professional, and governmental support do students believe are necessary for future librarians?
8. What is the essence of students' perspectives regarding the future of librarianship?

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore and describe the perspectives of Library and Information Science students regarding the future of librarianship.

Specifically, the study aimed to understand students' career aspirations, perceptions of professional opportunities within the Philippines and abroad, anticipated challenges, desired competencies, and support needs as they prepare to enter an increasingly dynamic and technology-driven profession. Through an examination of these lived perspectives, the study sought to develop a practical framework that may guide higher education institutions, professional organizations, policymakers, and library leaders in preparing globally competitive future librarians.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study may benefit various stakeholders.

Library and Information Science Students

The study may provide students with a broader understanding of the expanding career opportunities available within librarianship while encouraging proactive professional preparation and lifelong learning.

Prospective Students

The findings may help senior high school students and career decision-makers better understand the diversity, relevance, and future potential of librarianship as a profession.

Higher Education Institutions

Universities offering Library and Information Science programs may utilize the findings to strengthen curriculum development, career guidance, industry partnerships, and student support services.

Faculty Members

Faculty members may gain valuable insights regarding students' aspirations and expectations, enabling them to design more responsive learning experiences that prepare graduates for emerging professional roles.

Professional Organizations

Organizations such as the Philippine Librarians Association, Inc. (PLAI) and other professional bodies may use the findings to strengthen advocacy campaigns, mentorship initiatives, continuing professional development programs, and student engagement activities.

Government Agencies

Government agencies responsible for education, labor, culture, and information services may use the findings when formulating policies supporting library development, workforce planning, and professional advancement.

Employers

Libraries, archives, museums, educational institutions, corporations, and information organizations may better understand the expectations and competencies of future Library and Information Science professionals.

Future Researchers

The study may serve as a foundation for future qualitative and quantitative investigations concerning career development, professional identity, employability, leadership, and workforce sustainability within Library and Information Science.

Scope and Delimitations

This study explored the perspectives of undergraduate Library and Information Science students regarding the future of librarianship. Specifically, the investigation focused on students' perceptions of career opportunities, professional challenges, global possibilities, competencies, and support needs as they prepare for future professional practice.

The study employed a transcendental phenomenological research design involving fifteen purposively selected undergraduate Library and Information Science students enrolled in selected higher education institutions in the Philippines. Participants represented various year levels and possessed differing academic and internship experiences, enabling diverse yet information-rich perspectives.

The study was limited to students' lived perspectives and did not include practicing librarians, employers, faculty members, or policymakers. Likewise, the investigation did not quantitatively measure employability, career outcomes, or competency levels.

As a qualitative phenomenological inquiry, the findings are intended to provide rich descriptions and transferable insights rather than statistical generalizations. They may nevertheless inform curriculum enhancement, career development initiatives, policy formulation, and future research concerning the preparation of globally competitive library and information professionals.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative transcendental phenomenological research design to explore and describe the perspectives of Library and Information Science (LIS) students regarding the future of librarianship. Phenomenology is appropriate when the objective is to understand how individuals experience and make meaning of a particular phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). Rather than measuring variables or testing hypotheses, phenomenological research seeks to uncover the common essence of participants' lived experiences.

In this study, the phenomenon centered on how LIS students perceive their future profession, including the opportunities available within the Philippines and abroad, anticipated professional challenges, evolving competencies, and the support systems necessary to become globally competitive librarians.

The transcendental phenomenological approach was selected because it emphasizes describing participants' experiences as faithfully as possible while requiring the researcher to suspend personal assumptions through the process of *epoché* or bracketing.

Research Locale

The study was conducted among selected higher education institutions in the Philippines offering Bachelor of Library and Information Science (BLIS) programs.

To provide diverse perspectives, participants were drawn from institutions representing different geographical locations and institutional classifications, including:

- public universities;
- private higher education institutions;
- state universities and colleges;
- institutions with established library internship programs.

The selected institutions have active Library and Information Science programs recognized by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and prepare students for the Philippine Librarians Licensure Examination.

The diversity of institutional contexts allowed participants to describe varying educational experiences while reflecting common aspirations regarding the future of librarianship.

Participants of the Study

The participants consisted of fifteen (15) undergraduate Library and Information Science students purposively selected because they possessed rich experiences and informed perspectives regarding their chosen profession.

The participants represented:

- second-year students;
- third-year students;

- fourth-year students;
 - graduating students undergoing internship or practicum.
- The inclusion criteria were:
- officially enrolled in a Bachelor of Library and Information Science program;
 - completed at least one major professional course in librarianship;
 - willing to participate voluntarily;
 - able to articulate their experiences and perspectives.

Students with internship experiences were particularly valuable because of their direct exposure to professional library environments.

Data collection continued until thematic saturation was achieved, meaning no substantially new themes emerged from succeeding interviews.

Sampling Technique

The study employed purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique commonly used in qualitative research.

Purposive sampling enabled the researcher to intentionally select participants capable of providing rich, detailed, and meaningful descriptions of the phenomenon under investigation.

Maximum variation sampling was likewise considered by selecting participants with differences in:

- academic year level;
- institutional affiliation;
- internship experiences;
- career aspirations;
- leadership involvement;
- academic performance.

Such diversity enriched the breadth of perspectives while preserving the depth required in phenomenological inquiry.

Research Instrument

Data were collected using a researcher-developed semi-structured interview guide.

The interview protocol consisted of four major sections.

Part I. Participant Profile

Participants were asked about:

- age;
- year level;
- institution;
- internship experience;
- leadership experiences;
- career interests.

Part II. Choosing Library and Information Science

Sample interview questions included:

- What inspired you to pursue Library and Information Science?
- How did your family and friends react when you chose this program?
- What misconceptions about librarianship have you encountered?

Part III. Perspectives on the Future of Librarianship

Sample questions included:

- How do you see librarianship changing over the next ten years?
- What career opportunities excite you the most?
- What opportunities do you believe exist outside traditional libraries?
- What international opportunities do you hope to pursue?
- How do you think artificial intelligence will affect librarianship?
- What professional skills do future librarians need?

Part IV. Professional Challenges and Support

Sample questions included:

- What challenges do you anticipate after graduation?
- What support do universities provide?
- What support should government agencies provide?
- How can professional organizations help students?
- If you could redesign Library and Information Science education, what would you improve?
- What advice would you give future students considering librarianship?

The semi-structured format allowed participants to freely narrate their experiences while ensuring consistency across interviews.

Validation of the Research Instrument

To ensure content validity, the interview guide underwent expert evaluation by three specialists:

- one qualitative research expert;
 - one senior professor in Library and Information Science;
 - one licensed librarian serving in library administration.
- The validators evaluated the instrument based on:

- clarity;
- appropriateness;
- alignment with the research questions;
- comprehensiveness;
- logical sequencing.

Their recommendations resulted in:

- refinement of interview questions;
- simplification of wording;
- inclusion of probing questions;
- removal of repetitive items.

A pilot interview involving two BLIS students not included in the final sample further established the clarity and flow of the interview protocol.

Data Collection Procedure

The study followed a systematic data collection process.

Phase 1. Ethical Approval

Institutional approval was secured prior to participant recruitment.

Phase 2. Participant Recruitment

Potential participants received invitations explaining:

- study objectives;
- voluntary participation;
- confidentiality;
- expected interview duration.

Written informed consent was obtained.

Phase 3. Conduct of Interviews

Individual interviews were conducted either:

- face-to-face; or
- through secure online platforms.

Each interview lasted approximately **60 to 90 minutes**.

Participants were encouraged to describe:

- their career aspirations;
- educational experiences;
- perceived opportunities;
- anticipated challenges;
- future expectations.

With participants' permission, interviews were audio-recorded.

Phase 4. Transcription

Interview recordings were transcribed verbatim.
Participants were assigned pseudonyms such as:
Participant 1 (P1)
Participant 2 (P2)
...
Participant 15 (P15)
to maintain anonymity.

Phase 5. Member Checking

Participants reviewed interview summaries to verify:

- accuracy;
- completeness;
- intended meanings.

Corrections were incorporated before final analysis.

Data Analysis

Interview data were analyzed using **Moustakas' (1994) transcendental phenomenological analysis**, following seven systematic steps.

Step 1. Epoche (Bracketing)

The researcher documented personal assumptions regarding librarianship before analyzing the data.

Step 2. Horizontalization

Every meaningful statement related to the phenomenon was treated with equal importance.

Step 3. Reduction to Meaning Units

Similar statements were clustered into meaningful units.

Step 4. Theme Development

Meaning units were synthesized into broader themes representing shared experiences.

Step 5. Textural Description

Descriptions focused on **what** participants experienced.

Step 6. Structural Description

Descriptions examined **how** participants experienced the phenomenon within their educational, technological, and social contexts.

Step 7. Essence of the Phenomenon

The researcher synthesized both descriptions to construct the universal essence of students' perspectives regarding the future of librarianship.

Trustworthiness of the Study

To ensure rigor, the study adopted Lincoln and Guba's (1985) framework.

Credibility

Credibility was strengthened through:

- prolonged engagement;
- member checking;
- peer debriefing;
- triangulation of participant backgrounds.

Transferability

Rich contextual descriptions enable readers to determine applicability to similar educational contexts.

Dependability

An audit trail documented:

- interview procedures;

- coding decisions;
- analytical memos;
- theme development.

Confirmability

Reflexive journaling, audit documentation, and peer examination minimized researcher bias.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to accepted ethical principles governing human participant research.

Participants were informed regarding:

- study objectives;
- voluntary participation;
- confidentiality;
- anonymity;
- right to withdraw at any time;
- data protection measures.

Pseudonyms replaced participants' names.

Digital recordings and transcripts were stored securely using password-protected devices accessible only to the researchers.

The study ensured that no participant experienced psychological, social, academic, or professional harm as a result of participation.

Researcher Reflexivity

Recognizing that phenomenological research requires continual self-awareness, the researcher practiced reflexivity throughout the investigation.

Prior experiences with librarianship, professional education, and career development were acknowledged through reflective journaling and the process of *epoche*. The researcher intentionally suspended preconceived beliefs regarding the future of librarianship to allow participants' perspectives to emerge naturally from the interview narratives.

Regular consultations with qualitative research experts and peer reviewers further enhanced analytical objectivity and minimized interpretive bias.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Participant Profile

Fifteen undergraduate Bachelor of Library and Information Science students participated in the study.

The participants represented diverse educational backgrounds and varying levels of exposure to library practice.

The profile included:

Characteristic	Description
Participants	15 BLIS students
Year Levels	Second to Fourth Year
Age Range	19–24 years
Internship Experience	Academic, Public, School, Special Libraries
Leadership Experience	Student organizations, volunteer services
Career Interests	Academic libraries, digital librarianship, archives, museums, research support, corporate knowledge management, international organizations

Although participants differed in their educational experiences and career aspirations, they shared optimism regarding the expanding opportunities within the profession while recognizing the need for continuous learning and technological adaptability.

The phenomenological analysis generated six major themes that collectively describe how Library and Information Science students envision the future of librarianship:

1. Rediscovering Librarianship Beyond Traditional Stereotypes
2. Seeing Unlimited Career Opportunities in the Philippines and Beyond
3. Preparing for a Technology-Driven and AI-Enabled Profession
4. Overcoming Misconceptions and Professional Challenges
5. Building Competencies for Global Information Leadership
6. Envisioning Librarianship as a Lifelong Profession of Service, Innovation, and Impact

These themes are discussed in detail in the succeeding section, supported by rich participant narratives and interpretive analysis.

Following Moustakas' (1994) transcendental phenomenological analysis, six major themes emerged from the participants' narratives. These themes collectively describe how Library and Information Science (LIS) students envision the future of librarianship amid technological advancement, globalization, and the evolving information society. The themes likewise illuminate the participants' motivations for choosing the profession, their aspirations for local and international careers, the challenges they anticipate, and the support they believe is necessary to become competent and globally competitive information professionals.

Theme 1

Rediscovering Librarianship Beyond Traditional Stereotypes

One of the strongest themes that emerged from the interviews was the realization that librarianship extends far beyond the traditional image of organizing books or maintaining quiet libraries. Most participants admitted that prior to enrolling in the Bachelor of Library and Information Science (BLIS) program, they possessed only a limited understanding of the profession. Their perspectives changed considerably as they progressed through their coursework, interacted with practicing librarians, and participated in internship experiences.

Participants described librarians as educators, technology facilitators, researchers, digital information managers, advocates of lifelong learning, and leaders who contribute to knowledge creation and community development.

One participant shared:

"When I entered the program, I thought librarians simply arranged books and helped people find references. After studying Library and Information Science, I realized that librarians manage knowledge, teach information literacy, preserve history, support research, and even contribute to digital innovation. The profession is much bigger than what many people imagine." (P3)

Another participant reflected:

"Many people still joke that librarians only stamp books or tell people to keep quiet. They do not realize how much planning, technology, research, and management are involved. I now feel proud explaining what librarians really do." (P7)

Several participants emphasized that internships significantly transformed their understanding of librarianship.

One graduating student explained:

"During my internship, I assisted in managing institutional repositories, digitizing collections, helping faculty with research databases, and teaching students how to search scholarly resources. Those experiences completely changed my view of librarianship." (P12)

Participants likewise believed that public misconceptions contribute to the declining popularity of Library and Information Science among senior high school graduates.

As one participant expressed:

"Many students simply do not know what librarians actually do. If they understood the profession better, I believe more students would choose Library and Information Science." (P5)

The findings suggest that professional identity develops gradually through education and authentic professional exposure. Initial misconceptions give way to a deeper appreciation of librarianship as an intellectually challenging and socially significant profession. Classroom instruction, field experiences, and mentorship enable students to reconstruct outdated stereotypes and recognize librarians as information professionals who facilitate learning, innovation, and equitable access to knowledge.

Theme 2

Seeing Unlimited Career Opportunities in the Philippines and Beyond

Participants consistently expressed optimism regarding the wide range of career opportunities available to future librarians. Contrary to common assumptions, they viewed librarianship as a profession that offers employment across numerous sectors within the Philippines and internationally.

Students identified opportunities in:

- academic libraries;
- public libraries;

- school libraries;
- special libraries;
- government agencies;
- museums;
- archives;
- records management;
- publishing;
- corporate knowledge management;
- digital repositories;
- healthcare institutions;
- law firms;
- research organizations;
- technology companies;
- international organizations.

Several participants were particularly enthusiastic about careers outside traditional libraries.

One participant remarked:

"I was surprised that librarians can work in multinational companies managing knowledge systems. We are not limited to libraries anymore." (P10)

Another participant stated:

"I dream of working for an international university or research institute someday. Filipino librarians are respected because we are hardworking and adaptable." (P8)

Some students also recognized the growing demand for remote work.

One participant shared:

"With digital technologies, librarians can now work remotely as metadata specialists, information consultants, digital archivists, or research assistants for international clients." (P14)

Others envisioned careers in global organizations.

"I hope someday Filipino librarians can work for UNESCO, the United Nations, or international digital preservation projects because our profession contributes to education and cultural heritage." (P6)

Opportunities Identified in the Philippines

Participants identified numerous emerging careers available locally, including:

- University librarian
- School librarian
- Public librarian
- Medical librarian
- Law librarian
- Corporate information specialist
- Records manager
- Archivist
- Museum curator
- Digital librarian
- Institutional repository manager
- Research support librarian
- Government information officer
- Data management officer
- Knowledge management specialist
- Digital preservation specialist
- Information literacy educator
- Academic publishing specialist

Global Opportunities Identified

Participants likewise envisioned international careers, including:

- Digital archivist
- Metadata librarian
- Data curator
- Research data manager

- Scholarly communication librarian
- Open science specialist
- Knowledge consultant
- Information architect
- Digital content manager
- Artificial intelligence information trainer
- Corporate knowledge manager
- International university librarian
- NGO information specialist
- UNESCO information officer
- Remote information consultant

The findings indicate that contemporary students possess increasingly sophisticated understandings of the expanding labor market for information professionals. Their perspectives reflect the globalization of librarianship and the emergence of interdisciplinary careers integrating information science, technology, research, education, and knowledge management. Students no longer perceive librarianship as confined to physical libraries but rather as a globally relevant profession capable of contributing to multiple sectors.

Theme 3

Preparing for a Technology-Driven and AI-Enabled Profession

Participants unanimously acknowledged that technology will fundamentally shape the future of librarianship. Rather than fearing technological advancement, they generally viewed artificial intelligence (AI), automation, and digital transformation as opportunities to expand professional roles.

Many participants believed that future librarians must become technologically competent while maintaining the profession's human-centered values.

One participant observed:

"Artificial intelligence can organize information faster than humans, but it cannot replace librarians' judgment, ethics, empathy, and ability to teach people how to evaluate reliable information." (P2)

Another participant commented:

"Instead of competing with AI, librarians should learn how to use AI responsibly. It will become another tool that helps us serve people better." (P11)

Participants emphasized several technological competencies they considered essential:

- Artificial intelligence literacy
- Digital repositories
- Metadata standards
- Information systems
- Data analytics
- Digital preservation
- Cybersecurity awareness
- Research data management
- Digital scholarship
- User experience design
- Information visualization
- Cloud-based information systems

One participant reflected:

"The future librarian should know both technology and people. Technology helps organize information, but librarians help people understand and use that information wisely." (P9)

The findings suggest that students perceive technology as complementary rather than threatening. Participants demonstrated optimism regarding AI while recognizing the continued importance of human expertise, ethical decision-making, critical evaluation of information, and instructional leadership. This balance reflects an emerging vision of librarianship that integrates technological innovation with human-centered service.

Theme 4

Overcoming Misconceptions and Professional Challenges

Although participants expressed optimism regarding the future of librarianship, they likewise acknowledged numerous professional challenges that may influence their career development. Among the most frequently discussed

concerns were persistent misconceptions about the profession, limited public awareness of Library and Information Science, rapid technological changes, unequal employment opportunities, and the need for continuous professional development.

Many participants recalled encountering discouraging comments when they decided to pursue the Bachelor of Library and Information Science (BLIS) program. Family members, friends, and acquaintances often questioned their career choice because they perceived librarianship as a profession with limited growth and few employment opportunities.

One participant recalled:

"Some people asked me, 'Why study librarianship when everything is already on Google?' At first, it made me question my decision, but now I understand that information professionals are needed more than ever because people need guidance in finding credible information." (P4)

Another participant shared:

"Whenever someone asks about my course, they usually say, 'So you'll just arrange books?' I always explain that librarians manage information, support researchers, teach digital literacy, preserve cultural heritage, and even work in technology-related fields." (P13)

Participants also recognized that technological advancement presents both opportunities and pressures.

One participant reflected:

"Technology changes so fast that we need to keep learning throughout our careers. Graduation is only the beginning of our education." (P6)

Several students expressed concerns regarding employment competition.

One participant stated:

"Future librarians will compete not only with other librarians but also with professionals from information technology, computer science, and business. We need to continuously improve ourselves." (P1)

Another participant emphasized financial concerns.

"Some students worry about salary and career progression. If more people understood the opportunities available beyond traditional libraries, more students would probably choose this profession." (P10)

Participants also discussed institutional challenges affecting libraries in the Philippines, including:

- inadequate funding for library modernization;
- insufficient digital infrastructure in some institutions;
- limited access to emerging technologies;
- shortage of specialized training opportunities;
- varying levels of technological readiness among libraries;
- limited public promotion of librarianship as a career.

Despite these concerns, participants remained optimistic about the profession's future.

One participant summarized:

"Every profession has challenges. What matters is whether we continue learning and show society why librarians are still important." (P8)

The findings demonstrate that students recognize librarianship as a profession undergoing significant transformation. Rather than viewing challenges as barriers, participants interpreted them as opportunities for professional growth and innovation. Their responses suggest increasing resilience, adaptability, and commitment to lifelong learning—qualities essential for future information professionals.

Theme 5

Building Competencies for Global Information Leadership

Participants consistently emphasized that becoming a successful future librarian requires competencies extending far beyond traditional library operations. They believed that technical expertise alone is insufficient in an increasingly interconnected and technology-driven world. Instead, future librarians must possess interdisciplinary knowledge, leadership capabilities, communication skills, ethical judgment, and a commitment to continuous professional development.

When asked about the competencies that future librarians should develop, participants identified several essential areas.

Technological Competencies

Participants highlighted the importance of developing expertise in:

- artificial intelligence applications;
- digital repositories;
- metadata creation;

- cloud-based information systems;
- research data management;
- digital preservation;
- cybersecurity awareness;
- information systems;
- database management;
- digital content management.

One participant remarked:

"Technology will continue changing, but librarians must become confident users of new technologies instead of fearing them." (P15)

Research Competencies

Students also emphasized that librarians increasingly support academic research.

Competencies identified included:

- literature searching;
- systematic review support;
- bibliometrics;
- citation management;
- scholarly publishing;
- research ethics;
- open science initiatives;
- data curation.

One participant explained:

"Librarians are becoming research partners. We help researchers find, organize, and preserve knowledge." (P2)

Leadership Competencies

Participants likewise stressed leadership.

Future librarians should demonstrate:

- strategic planning;
- project management;
- decision-making;
- innovation;
- advocacy;
- community engagement;
- organizational leadership.

One participant reflected:

"Librarians should not wait for change. We should become leaders who create change." (P11)

Interpersonal Competencies

Participants considered communication equally important.

Desired competencies included:

- collaboration;
- public speaking;
- teaching;
- empathy;
- intercultural communication;
- teamwork;
- customer service.

As one participant observed:

"Libraries exist because of people. No matter how advanced technology becomes, librarians still need strong communication and interpersonal skills." (P7)

Global Competencies

Students envisioned librarians working internationally.

They believed future librarians should develop:

- proficiency in English;

- intercultural competence;
- global information standards;
- international cataloging practices;
- digital collaboration;
- cross-cultural communication.

One participant explained:

"If Filipino librarians want to work abroad, we should prepare ourselves using international standards while remaining proud of our Filipino identity." (P5)

Participants viewed future readiness as multidimensional. Their narratives demonstrate an understanding that global competitiveness depends upon balancing technological expertise with leadership, ethical practice, communication, research capability, and adaptability. Rather than narrowly defining librarianship through technical functions, students envisioned a profession requiring holistic personal and professional development.

Theme 6

Envisioning Librarianship as a Lifelong Profession of Service, Innovation, and Impact

The final theme captures participants' overall vision of librarianship as a profession dedicated to serving society through knowledge, education, innovation, and lifelong learning.

Nearly every participant described librarianship not simply as employment but as a vocation centered on empowering individuals and communities through equitable access to information.

One participant stated:

"Our work is not about books. Our work is about helping people improve their lives through information." (P12)

Another participant reflected:

"The future librarian becomes a teacher, researcher, technology facilitator, digital curator, and community builder at the same time." (P9)

Participants believed librarians contribute to numerous Sustainable Development Goals by supporting:

- quality education;
- lifelong learning;
- digital inclusion;
- cultural preservation;
- research innovation;
- community development;
- informed citizenship.

Many students expressed pride in belonging to a profession that promotes knowledge as a public good.

One participant shared:

"I believe librarians help build better societies because informed citizens make better decisions." (P3)

Another participant concluded:

"If I become a librarian, I want to inspire future students just as my professors inspired me. Librarians leave a legacy through the people they help." (P14)

Several participants emphasized that the future of librarianship depends upon attracting passionate, innovative, and socially responsible students.

One participant summarized:

"Libraries may change, technology may change, but the mission remains the same—to connect people with reliable information and lifelong learning." (P6)

The participants' narratives reveal an optimistic and values-driven conception of librarianship. Students perceive the profession as one that continuously adapts to societal change while remaining grounded in service, education, equity, and ethical stewardship of information. This perspective underscores a strong sense of professional identity and commitment to contributing meaningfully at local, national, and global levels.

Composite Textural Description (What the Participants Experienced)

The participants experienced a transformative journey from viewing librarianship as a traditional occupation associated with books and libraries to understanding it as a dynamic profession with diverse local and international career pathways. Through their academic courses, internships, interactions with faculty, and exposure to practicing librarians, they discovered that librarians serve as educators, technology facilitators, researchers, information managers, digital curators, advocates of lifelong learning, and leaders in community development.

They experienced encouragement from mentors and professional organizations, but they also encountered misconceptions from society, concerns regarding technological change, and questions about the profession's visibility.

These experiences deepened their appreciation for the complexity of librarianship and strengthened their commitment to preparing for careers that extend beyond conventional library settings. Participants expressed excitement about opportunities in research, archives, museums, digital scholarship, corporate knowledge management, international organizations, and remote information services while recognizing the importance of continuous learning and professional adaptability.

Composite Structural Description (How the Participants Experienced the Phenomenon)

Participants' perspectives were shaped by multiple interacting contexts. Formal education provided foundational knowledge of librarianship, while internships and practicum experiences offered authentic exposure to contemporary professional practice. Faculty mentors, licensed librarians, professional conferences, and student organizations further broadened their understanding of the profession and reinforced positive professional identities.

Simultaneously, participants encountered external influences such as societal stereotypes, family expectations, technological advancements, globalization, and evolving labor market demands. Rather than discouraging them, these influences motivated participants to become lifelong learners capable of integrating technological competence with ethical service, leadership, research support, and community engagement. Their understanding of librarianship emerged through continuous reflection, experiential learning, and interactions with the broader professional community.

Essence of the Phenomenon

The essence of Library and Information Science students' perspectives regarding the future of librarianship lies in their recognition of librarianship as an evolving global profession that combines technology, education, leadership, research, and human-centered service to empower individuals and communities through knowledge.

Although participants acknowledged persistent misconceptions, rapid technological changes, and increasing professional expectations, they perceived these not as obstacles but as opportunities to redefine the profession and expand its societal impact. Their narratives reveal a shared commitment to lifelong learning, technological adaptability, ethical practice, and global engagement.

Ultimately, the future of librarianship, as envisioned by the participants, is not confined to physical libraries or traditional information services. Instead, it is characterized by globally competitive professionals who connect people with trustworthy information, foster innovation, preserve cultural memory, support research, strengthen digital inclusion, and contribute to sustainable social development.

Conclusions

This phenomenological study explored the perspectives of Library and Information Science (LIS) students regarding the future of librarianship, focusing on career opportunities, professional challenges, global possibilities, and the support needed to prepare future-ready librarians. Guided by the lived experiences and reflections of fifteen undergraduate LIS students, the study generated six interrelated themes that collectively portray librarianship as a dynamic, technology-enabled, globally connected, and service-oriented profession.

Based on the findings, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. Library and Information Science students recognize that librarianship has evolved far beyond its traditional image.

Participants consistently rejected the stereotype that librarians merely organize books or maintain library collections. Instead, they perceived librarians as educators, information specialists, digital curators, researchers, technology facilitators, knowledge managers, and advocates of lifelong learning. Their professional identity developed progressively through classroom instruction, internships, and interactions with practicing librarians.

2. Students perceive librarianship as a profession with expanding career opportunities in the Philippines and internationally.

Participants demonstrated strong awareness that graduates of Library and Information Science may pursue careers not only in academic, public, school, and special libraries but also in archives, museums, corporate organizations, healthcare institutions, research centers, publishing companies, government agencies, digital repositories, information technology firms, and international organizations.

They likewise recognized the growing opportunities associated with remote work, digital scholarship, research data management, and knowledge management within global information ecosystems.

3. Technological advancement is viewed as an opportunity rather than a threat.

Rather than fearing artificial intelligence, automation, and digital transformation, participants believed that these innovations would redefine and expand the profession. They emphasized that future librarians should integrate technological competence with ethical judgment, critical thinking, communication skills, and human-centered service. Participants believed that technology would enhance rather than replace the professional roles of librarians.

4. Students anticipate several professional challenges that require continuous adaptation.

Participants acknowledged persistent misconceptions about librarianship, limited public awareness of the profession, rapid technological changes, increasing interdisciplinary competition, and unequal access to modern library technologies as significant challenges.

Nevertheless, these challenges were interpreted as opportunities for innovation, advocacy, and lifelong professional growth.

5. Future librarians require multidimensional competencies to remain globally competitive.

Participants emphasized that technical knowledge alone is insufficient for future success.

They identified the need for competencies in:

- artificial intelligence;
- digital information management;
- research support;
- leadership;
- communication;
- project management;
- global information standards;
- digital preservation;
- information ethics;
- lifelong learning.

These competencies collectively prepare graduates for increasingly interdisciplinary professional environments.

6. Strong institutional and professional support is essential for sustaining the future of librarianship.

Participants emphasized the importance of supportive universities, faculty mentors, professional organizations, government agencies, employers, and practicing librarians in developing globally competitive graduates.

Internships, mentoring programs, scholarships, technology access, professional networking, and continuing education were viewed as critical support mechanisms.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed.

For Higher Education Institutions

Universities offering Library and Information Science programs may consider regularly reviewing and enhancing their curricula to ensure alignment with emerging developments in artificial intelligence, digital scholarship, research data management, knowledge management, cybersecurity awareness, information ethics, and digital preservation.

Greater emphasis may also be placed on experiential learning through internships, community engagement, industry collaborations, and interdisciplinary projects.

For Library and Information Science Faculty

Faculty members may strengthen students' professional identity by exposing them to diverse career pathways within librarianship.

Inviting practicing librarians from academic institutions, corporations, healthcare organizations, archives, museums, international agencies, and technology companies may broaden students' understanding of the profession.

Faculty may likewise integrate career coaching, leadership development, innovation projects, and research experiences into undergraduate education.

For Professional Organizations

Professional organizations such as the Philippine Librarians Association, Inc. (PLAI), the Association of Special Libraries of the Philippines (ASLP), the Philippine Association of Academic and Research Librarians (PAARL), and other library associations may strengthen mentorship initiatives connecting students with experienced professionals.

Career seminars, student conferences, leadership programs, scholarships, and international networking opportunities may further prepare students for global professional practice.

For Government Agencies

Government agencies may continue investing in library modernization, digital infrastructure, professional development, and scholarship opportunities for Library and Information Science students.

Policies promoting stronger library systems, increased employment opportunities, research support, and digital transformation initiatives may further strengthen the profession.

For Library Administrators

Library administrators may continue providing internship opportunities that expose students to emerging professional practices including:

- digital repositories;
- research support;
- institutional repositories;
- metadata creation;
- artificial intelligence applications;
- makerspaces;
- digital preservation;
- community engagement.

Mentorship programs pairing experienced librarians with students may facilitate smoother transitions into professional practice.

For Students

Library and Information Science students are encouraged to become lifelong learners by continuously strengthening both technical and interpersonal competencies.

Participation in research conferences, professional organizations, certification programs, volunteer work, leadership activities, and international collaborations may further enhance employability and global competitiveness.

For Future Researchers

Future investigations may examine:

- employers' expectations regarding future librarians;
- practicing librarians' perceptions of emerging technologies;
- comparative studies involving different countries;
- quantitative validation of the proposed framework;
- longitudinal studies examining graduates' career trajectories;
- artificial intelligence integration in Library and Information Science education.

Implications of the Study

The findings of this investigation generate important implications for Library and Information Science education, professional practice, workforce development, and policymaking.

Educational Implications

Library and Information Science education should move beyond preparing students exclusively for traditional library environments.

Curricula may increasingly integrate:

- artificial intelligence;
- digital humanities;
- research data management;
- digital preservation;
- information analytics;
- innovation management;
- leadership;
- entrepreneurship.

Preparing graduates for multiple career pathways enhances employability while ensuring responsiveness to rapidly changing information ecosystems.

Professional Implications

The study reinforces the evolving identity of librarians as multidisciplinary information professionals.

Libraries may increasingly recognize librarians as:

- educators;
- technology specialists;
- research consultants;
- knowledge managers;
- community leaders;
- digital innovators.

Professional practice therefore requires continuous adaptation while preserving the profession's ethical commitment to equitable access to information.

Policy Implications

The findings support increased governmental investment in:

- library modernization;
- technological infrastructure;
- workforce development;
- scholarship programs;
- continuing professional education;
- national advocacy promoting librarianship.

Strengthening public awareness of librarianship may likewise contribute to increased enrollment in Library and Information Science programs.

Societal Implications

Participants' perspectives reinforce the continuing importance of librarians in promoting:

- lifelong learning;
- digital inclusion;
- research excellence;
- informed citizenship;
- cultural preservation;
- evidence-based decision-making.

As societies become increasingly information-dependent, librarians remain essential contributors to sustainable development.

Proposed Framework

Future Librarian Career Readiness Framework (FLCRF)

Drawing from the participants' lived experiences, this study proposes the Future Librarian Career Readiness Framework (FLCRF), which illustrates the developmental pathway through which Library and Information Science students become globally competitive information professionals.

The framework consists of five interconnected dimensions, each representing a critical stage in preparing future librarians for evolving professional environments.

Dimension 1. Professional Identity Formation

Career readiness begins with developing a clear understanding of librarianship beyond traditional stereotypes.

This stage emphasizes:

- appreciation of professional values;
- understanding diverse career pathways;
- commitment to lifelong learning;
- ethical responsibility;
- service orientation.

Students begin viewing themselves as future information professionals rather than custodians of books.

Dimension 2. Future-Oriented Knowledge and Competencies

Students develop competencies in:

- information organization;
- digital librarianship;
- artificial intelligence applications;
- metadata;
- research support;

- digital preservation;
- knowledge management;
- instructional services;
- leadership;
- communication;
- critical thinking.

Dimension 3. Experiential Learning and Professional Exposure

Professional readiness is strengthened through:

- internships;
- practicum;
- research projects;
- student organizations;
- community extension;
- professional conferences;
- mentoring;
- interdisciplinary collaborations.

Authentic experiences enable students to integrate theory with practice.

Dimension 4. Global Competitiveness and Professional Adaptability

Students cultivate:

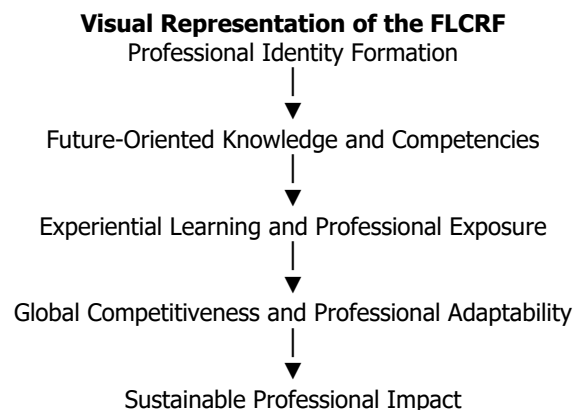
- technological adaptability;
- intercultural competence;
- international standards;
- innovation;
- resilience;
- collaboration;
- entrepreneurial thinking;
- continuous professional development.

These qualities prepare graduates for careers within both Philippine and international information environments.

Dimension 5. Sustainable Professional Impact

Future librarians contribute to:

- lifelong learning;
- research excellence;
- digital inclusion;
- community development;
- cultural heritage preservation;
- knowledge creation;
- evidence-based decision-making;
- sustainable national and global development.



↓
Future-Ready Global Librarians

Theoretical Proposition

Based on the participants' shared perspectives, the study advances the following theoretical proposition:
Library and Information Science students become future-ready global librarians when strong professional identity, technology-enhanced competencies, authentic experiential learning, continuous institutional support, and lifelong professional development converge to prepare them for dynamic local and international information environments. The future of librarianship depends not only on technological advancement but also on the profession's enduring commitment to ethical service, innovation, knowledge stewardship, and community empowerment.

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