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Dossier temático «Mediación en la información»

Information Mediation Practices in Algerian Academic Libraries: A Case Study of Setif 2 University

**Prácticas de mediación de información en bibliotecas académicas de Argelia:
un estudio de caso de la Universidad Sétif 2**

**Práticas de mediação de informação em bibliotecas acadêmicas argelinas: um
estudo de caso da Universidade Setif 2**

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Abstract

This paper investigates information mediation practices in Algerian academic libraries, with a case study of Mohamed Lamine Debaghine Setif 2 University. It aims to explore librarians' understanding of information mediation concepts and principles, as well as the challenges and opportunities for improvement.

The study used the descriptive approach, surveying thirty librarians using a stratified sampling to ensure representation from both librarians (with direct user contact and those without). The survey instrument included of eight questions divided into two thematic sections, along with a section for personal data. Statistical analysis of the data reached a set of results, mainly related to the need of strengthen information mediation practices in academic libraries, focusing on connecting students to information and promoting digital literacy.

The study also revealed a variety of methods currently used in information mediation practices. The majority of librarians expressed a need for training in research methodologies, information retrieval, and information ethics. Librarians face several challenges, with the most prominent being understanding students' information needs and helping them bridge the digital and information literacy gap.

Keywords: INFORMATION MEDIATION; MEDIATION PRACTICES; LIBRARIANS; ACADEMIC LIBRARY; ALGERIA.

Resumen

Este artículo investiga las prácticas de mediación de la información en las bibliotecas académicas de Argelia, con un estudio de caso de la Universidad

Mohamed Lamine Debaghine Setif 2. Su objetivo es explorar la comprensión de los bibliotecarios sobre los conceptos y principios de la mediación de la información, así como los desafíos y oportunidades de mejora.

El estudio utilizó un enfoque descriptivo, encuestando a treinta bibliotecarios utilizando un muestreo estratificado para garantizar la representación de ambos bibliotecarios (con contacto directo con el usuario y aquellos que no). El instrumento de encuesta constó de ocho preguntas divididas en dos apartados temáticos, junto con un apartado de datos personales. El análisis estadístico de los datos arrojó un conjunto de resultados, principalmente relacionados con la necesidad de fortalecer las prácticas de mediación de información en las bibliotecas académicas, enfocándose en conectar a los estudiantes con la información y promover la alfabetización digital.

El estudio también reveló una variedad de métodos utilizados actualmente en las prácticas de mediación de información. La mayoría de los bibliotecarios expresaron la necesidad de capacitación en metodologías de investigación, recuperación de información y ética de la información. Los bibliotecarios enfrentan varios desafíos, siendo el más destacado comprender las necesidades de información de los estudiantes y ayudarlos a cerrar la brecha de alfabetización digital e informacional.

Palabras clave: MEDIACIÓN DE INFORMACIÓN; PRÁCTICAS DE MEDIACIÓN; BIBLIOTECARIOS; BIBLIOTECA ACADÉMICA; ARGELIA.

Resumo

Este artigo investiga práticas de mediação de informação em bibliotecas acadêmicas argelinas, com um estudo de caso da Universidade Mohamed Lamine Debaghine Setif 2. O objetivo é explorar a compreensão dos bibliotecários sobre os conceitos e princípios da mediação da informação, bem como os desafios e oportunidades de melhoria.

O estudo utilizou a abordagem descritiva, entrevistando trinta bibliotecários por meio de uma amostragem estratificada para garantir a representação de ambos os bibliotecários (com e sem contato direto com o usuário). O instrumento de pesquisa incluiu oito questões divididas em duas seções temáticas, além de uma seção para dados pessoais. A análise estatística dos dados alcançou um conjunto de resultados, principalmente relacionados à necessidade de fortalecer as práticas de mediação da informação nas bibliotecas acadêmicas, com foco na conexão dos alunos à informação e na promoção da alfabetização digital.

O estudo também revelou uma variedade de métodos atualmente utilizados nas práticas de mediação de informação. A maioria dos bibliotecários expressou necessidade de treinamento em metodologias de pesquisa, recuperação de informação e ética da informação. Os bibliotecários enfrentam vários desafios, sendo o mais importante compreender as necessidades de informação dos alunos e ajudá-los a colmatar a lacuna na literacia digital e informacional.

Palavras-chave: MEDIAÇÃO DA INFORMAÇÃO; PRÁCTICAS DE MEDIAÇÃO; BIBLIOTECÁRIOS; BIBLIOTECA ACADÊMICA; ARGÉLIA.

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Introduction

The digital revolution has significantly transformed how academic libraries function, especially in facilitating access to and utilization of diverse information resources. Today's librarians face increasing demands to expand their roles beyond traditional services (Thiruppathi, 2024). They should bridge information and digital literacy gaps (Vahid Aqili & Isfandyari Moghaddam, 2008), effectively connecting students with the information for their academic achievement.

Algerian academic libraries play a crucial role in supporting students and providing them with the information necessary for learning, academic research purposes (Ogunmodede, 2023). Their role should go beyond lending books or providing study spaces. Instead, they need to undertake new and advanced tasks in order to equip students with the essential tools to satisfy their information needs (Righetto et al., 2022) in the face of technological advancements in information access.

However, understanding of how Algerian academic libraries are implementing information mediation practices remains limited. This study, focusing on information mediation practices at Mohamed Lamine Debaghine Setif 2 University, aims to gain a comprehensive understanding of these practices.

The role of librarian as information mediator in academic library

Academic libraries are designed to support the research and learning needs of students, in this environment, librarians play an important role in helping users navigate vast information resources for their studies or research (Boisvert, 2015). In addition, bridging the gap between information users and the vast amount of

information available. These efforts that help students obtain information are known as mediation. It defines as activities promoting interaction between library collections and users. In the academic libraries, this mission becomes especially important, since the collections constitute study material in themselves (De Bogui, 2015). Below we learn about some transformations of the librarian's role.

From Gatekeeper to mediator

Traditionally, the library is a place where people go to obtain answers of their questions. This inherent tension between the unknown and the knowable drives users to libraries, seeking to bridge the gap between their lack of information and the vast amount available (Hafner & Camarigg, 1992). Libraries were repositories of knowledge, focusing on collecting, organizing, and making books accessible to readers. Librarians, in this period may have acted as "gatekeepers" controlling access to information (Ewing & Hauptman, 1992). However, if we analyze the role of the librarians, we will find that are, by nature, intermediaries. Because they form a connecting link between a query and resources that provide a resolution, between an idea and its realization (Ewing & Hauptman, 1992). In the past, the idea of librarians as mediators is not taught in library school, or widely discussed in professional literature. Mediation is not mentioned in job titles, and it is not mentioned in job descriptions as a key responsibility (Hafner & Camarigg, 1992). In this context, (Ewing & Hauptman, 1992) notes:

The successful information mediation has gone beyond gatekeeping, from providing an answer or a resource with an answer to attempts to understand the environment, the physical surroundings, the social or educational context, and the ethical, political, and economic climate in which the process takes place.

Through this idea, it becomes clear that the concept of information mediation goes far beyond the traditional role of the librarian; it signifies a broader and more diverse role, than delivering information to users. According to (Azevedo & Ogécime, 2019) the goal of mediation is not simply to provide information. Instead, it emphasizes functions that encourage the development of user autonomy. This autonomy allows users to acquire a set of series transversal skills necessary to classify and evaluate information and its sources effectively.

The Evolving role of the librarian as mediator

In this expanding world of information, librarians have transformed from passive gatekeepers to active information mediators. Modern information professionals, acting as mediators between information providers, users, and information technologies, embrace a hybrid role requiring flexibility, adaptability, and specialized skills (Wormell, 2016). Modern librarians are flexible and adaptable, able to modify their approach based on user needs and the ever-evolving information landscape. They have a strong foundation in organizing information, research strategies and methodologies, and digital literacy.

The evolving role of librarians requires the development of new skills. Especially in understanding user needs and behaviours. As the purpose of obtaining, organizing, and making information accessible is to serve users (Anderson, 2010), it makes good sense that librarians prioritize this aspect of information mediation. According to (IFLA Information Literacy, 2006): “The current information overload requires people to validate and assess information to verify its reliability”. This highlights why understanding user needs becomes even more crucial. As the volume and variety of information sources have exploded, the ability to evaluate and verify information reliability has become an essential skill for users. This points to a solution to information overload: information literacy. This concept was formulated in the United States in the 1970s, and it addresses users' needs, search strategies, and use of information sources, especially electronic ones (Azevedo & Ogécime, 2019). Equipping users with information literacy skills empowers them to navigate the vast information landscape effectively. The concept of information literacy extends beyond simply acquiring library skills. It emphasizes the ability to utilize complex information from diverse sources. This goes beyond mastery of search strategies. The emphasis is on critical thinking and analysis, allowing users to synthesize information from different sources to construct meaning, solve problems, and make informed decisions (IFLA Information Literacy, 2006). Information literacy empowers individuals to become active participants, not just passive consumers.

“In the digital age, have assumed a pivotal role in curating, organizing and enhancing digital resources to facilitate user access and enhance information

discovery.” As (Thiruppathi, 2024) points out, librarians have become central figures in managing this vast amount of digital information. They work as curators, selecting and organizing valuable digital resources. They may also enhance these resources by adding summaries, creating access points, or even creating new digital tools to navigate information effectively. The modern role of librarians must receive in-depth training in modern information retrieval strategies, especially those related to the internet, and various electronic databases. This expanded knowledge base allows them to effectively train users to navigate these vast online resources. By offering these comprehensive resources and training, libraries are bridging the digital divide, enabling users to have greater access to the information (Vahid Aqili & Isfandyari Moghaddam, 2008). Finally, the role of librarians is not static. To maintain their effectiveness as information mediators, librarians require ongoing education and professional development to keep pace with the expanding word of information (Wormell, 2016).

Objectives

The current study aims to:

- Investigate Algerian librarians’ understanding of information mediation concepts and principles.
- Describe information mediation activities offered in Algerian academic libraries.
- Analyze the methods and approaches utilized by librarians in information mediation practices.
- Identify the necessary skills for Algerian librarians to play the role of information mediators and assess their training needs.
- Explore the challenges faced by Algerian librarians in implementing information mediation practices.
- Identify Algerian librarians' suggestions for improving information mediation services in academic libraries.

Methodology

This study used the descriptive approach to investigate the different practices of information mediation in the four academic libraries of Mohamed Lamine Debaghine Setif 2 University. The university's library system consists of 57 staff, including 30 specialized librarians. A survey instrument was designed to collect data from a stratified sample of 30 university librarians. The sample comprised librarians including those who directly help users (e.g. reference librarians) and those with less direct contact (e.g. cataloging librarians). To explore potential differences in information mediation practices. The questionnaire consisted of the following sections:

- **Section 1: Personal Data:** This section collected demographic information about participant librarians.
- **Section 2: Understanding Information Mediation Practices by Librarians:** This section aimed to assess librarians' understanding of information mediation concepts and principles. The questions in this section focused on gathering descriptive information about their current practices.
- **Section 3: Librarians' Perspective in Optimizing Information Mediation Practices:** This section collected librarians' suggestions and recommendations, and the most challenges faced to improve information mediation within the academic libraries.

Descriptive statistics, such as frequency and percentages, were used to analyze the quantitative data collected from the three sections of the questionnaire. This analysis will help identify librarians' understanding and current information mediation practices.

Results achieved

To explore the practices of information mediation in Algerian academic libraries. We will divide the data collection into three parts: the first part about demographics of the participants, the second part will explore how librarians currently perform information mediation. The third part will focus on Librarians' perspective in Optimizing Information Mediation practices.

1. Demographics

Table 1: Sample profile of participants

| | Option | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------|--|-----------|------------|
| Gender | Male | 16 | 53.33 % |
| | Female | 14 | 46.67 % |
| | Total | 30 | 100 % |
| Experience | Less than 10 years | 15 | 50 % |
| | Between 10 and 20 years | 14 | 46.67 % |
| | More than 21 years | 01 | 3.33 % |
| | Total | 30 | 100 % |
| Library Name | Central Library | 09 | 30% |
| | Humanities and social sciences Library | 06 | 20 % |
| | Law and political sciences Library | 10 | 33.33 % |
| | Literature and Foreign Languages Library | 05 | 16.67 % |
| | Total | 30 | 100 % |
| Position | Direct contact with users | 22 | 73.33 |
| | Indirect contact with users | 08 | 26.67 |
| | Total | 30 | 100 % |

Source: Created by author.

This table summarizes demographics of the 30 participants involved in the study. Here some initial observations:

- **Gender:** The sample is relatively balanced with slight majority Male librarians with (53.33%).
- **Experience:** The University's recent founding in 2012 is reflected in the librarians' experience, most (50%) have less than 10 years, followed by those with 10-20 years (46.67%).
- **Library Name:** participants are distributed across the university's library system, with (30%) of specialized librarians located in the Central Library. As the primary service point for all university students, the Central Library

also oversees the administrative and technical coordination of the three faculty libraries. The law and Political Sciences Library has the largest number of specialized librarians, comprising (33.33%). The humanities and Social Sciences Library and the Literature and Foreign Languages Library have fewer specialized librarians (20%, 16.67%). which may be attributed to the difference in faculty hiring policies. and these percentages represent the distribution of specialized librarians only and do not reflect the total staffing in each library.

- **Position:** In Setif 2 university libraries, the majority (73.33%) of participants have positions with direct contact with users, indicating a focus on user-oriented roles in these libraries. In addition, I think this aligns well with our study on information mediation practices.

2. Understanding information mediation practices by librarians

Table 2: Librarians' understanding of the concept: "information mediation"

| Option | Direct contact with users | Indirect contact with users |
|--|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Solve students' problems related to the library | 09 (16.98 %) | 02 (16.67 %) |
| Teaching students digital literacy skills | 12 (22.64 %) | - |
| Connecting students with the information they need | 17 (32.08 %) | 05 (41.67 %) |
| Teaching information literacy skills | 15 (28.30 %) | 05 (41.67 %) |
| Total | 53 (100 %) | 12 (100 %) |

Source: Created by author.

The table above shows that the librarians who work in positions directly related to students (e.g., Bibliographic research services, Reference and information services...) believe that the concept of "information mediation" focuses on "Connecting students with the information they need" (32.08 %), and "Teaching information literacy skills" (28.30 %), while a smaller percentage (16.98 %) believe it solving students' problems related to the library. Although the second section of the table is for librarians who work in positions that do not directly contact with students (e.g., cataloging librarians...) but their understanding of information mediation seems similar to their colleagues in the first group.

Table 3: Information mediation activities available in the library

| Option | Direct contact with users | Indirect contact with users |
|---|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Training on using library databases | 14 (35.90 %) | 07 (50%) |
| Help in searching for information | 20 (51.28 %) | 05 (35.71 %) |
| Providing academic consultations | 04 (10.26 %) | 01 (2.14%) |
| Assisting students with information retrieval | 01 (2.56 %) | 01 (2.14%) |
| Total | 39 (100%) | 14 (100%) |

Source: Created by author.

The table illustrates the various information mediation activities offered at Setif 2 University libraries. It shows that the majority of librarians' answers with direct users' contact (51.28 %) primarily focuses on information search assistance. Which is the main role of a librarian. (Leckie & Fullerton, 1999) emphasize the importance of Librarians understanding their users' needs in order to serve them better. Conversely, the most (50%) librarians' answers without direct users' contact prioritize training on using library databases. These contrasting choices; suggest potential differences in librarians' understanding of "information mediation". However, the low percentages of librarians selecting "assisting students with information retrieval" (2.56% and 2.14%) indicate a possible misunderstanding of the concept.

Table 4: Methods used in providing information mediation activities.

| Option | Direct contact with users | Indirect contact with users |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| The library' Website | 08 (28.57 %) | 04 (33.33 %) |
| The library' page on Social media | 07 (25 %) | 03 (25 %) |
| E-learning platforms | - | - |
| Face-to-face | 09 (32.14 %) | 03 (25 %) |
| Emails | 04 (14.29 %) | 02 (16.67 %) |
| Total | 28 (100%) | 12 (100%) |

Source: Created by author.

The table highlights the various methods Setif 2 University libraries use to provide information mediation services. The data reveals that face-to-face

interactions within the library (32.14 %) and online assistance through the library website (28.57 %) and social media (25 %) are prominent methods. It is important to note that all libraries typically offer online public access catalogs (OPACs) to facilitate bibliographic research. Moreover, librarians without direct users contact prioritize the library website (33.33%) as their primary tool, followed by face-to-face interaction and social media (25% each). Conversely, they report that E-learning platforms are not used for information mediation activities. This difference might be due to the libraries' strategic aim to expand their presence in both physical and digital spaces.

Table 5: The skills necessary for the role of an effective information mediator.

| Option | Direct contact with users | Indirect contact with users |
|--|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| High skills in documentary research techniques | 18 (37.50 %) | 05 (35.71 %) |
| Strong communication skills with library users | 17 (35.42 %) | 07 (50 %) |
| Knowledge of Ethical use of information | 06 (12.50 %) | - |
| High skills in digital literacy | 05 (10.42 %) | 02 (14.29 %) |
| Other (please specify) | 02 (4.17 %) | - |
| Total | 48 (100%) | 14 (100%) |

Source: Created by author.

This table gathers librarians' perspectives on their understanding of the effective information mediator role and its necessary skills. Both librarians with direct and indirect users contact identified “high proficiency in documentary research techniques” (37.50%, 35.71%) and “strong communication skills with library users” (35.42%, 50%) as the most essential skills. whereas ethical information use and digital literacy are also recognized as crucial, the participants in this survey may have prioritized the basic skills. Notably, 4.17% of responses specified intrinsic motivation as a necessary skill for information mediator work.

3. Librarians' perspective in Optimizing Information Mediation practices

Table 6: Librarian-identified indicators of successful information mediation practices

| Option | Direct contact with users | Indirect contact with users |
|--|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Develop students' effective information research skills. | 19 (35.85 %) | 07 (36.84 %) |
| Optimize library service utilization | 18 (33.96 %) | 05 (26.32 %) |
| Student-reported satisfaction with library services | 12 (22.64 %) | 03 (15.79 %) |
| Reduction in complaints related to the library | 04 (7.55 %) | 04 (21.05 %) |
| Total | 53 (100%) | 19 (100%) |

Source: created by author.

Librarians were surveyed in two categories (direct and indirect user contact) about their views on successful information mediation practices. The most common indicator for both groups (around 36%) was developing students' information research skills. While there was general agreement on the top indicator, librarians with direct user contact placed slightly more emphasis on optimizing library service utilization. "Student-reported satisfaction" received lower ratings from both groups (22.64%, 15.79%), and "reduction in complaints" was the least chosen indicator for librarians with direct contact (7.55 %), Perhaps because of their ability to solve problems directly. This suggests a focus on developing student skills, optimizing services, and a shared understanding of successful information mediation, with some variations based on user contact levels.

Table 7: Librarians-suggested methods for assessing information mediation practices

| Option | Direct contact with users | Indirect contact with users |
|---|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Observing and Interviewing Users | 15 (31.25 %) | 04 (33.33 %) |
| Analyzing statistical data on library utilization | 13 (27.08 %) | 03 (25.00 %) |
| Users satisfaction Surveys | 06 (12.50 %) | 01(8.33 %) |
| Student research outcomes | 14 (29.17 %) | 04 (33.33 %) |
| Total | 48 (100%) | 12 (100%) |

Source: Created by author.

This table shows that librarians in both categories suggest a variety of methods to assess information mediation practices. They prioritize direct user feedback through observation and interviews (31.25%, 33.33%), along with student research outcomes. While analyzing library usage data is important, user satisfaction surveys were less frequently mentioned. There is minimal difference in preferred methods between librarian categories, suggesting a common understanding of assessment practices.

Table 8: Training needs for Effective information mediation practices in libraries

| Option | Direct contact with users | Indirect contact with users |
|---|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Research methodologies and information retrieval strategies | 16 (29.63 %) | 04 (26.67 %) |
| Effective communication strategies | 12 (22.22 %) | 04 (26.67 %) |
| Artificial intelligence in scientific research. | 11 (20.37 %) | 03 (20.00 %) |
| Ethics of information mediation practice. | 15 (27.78 %) | 04 (26.67 %) |
| Total | 54 (100%) | 15 (100%) |

Source: Created by author.

To provide an effective information mediation services, libraries need to invest in high-quality training programs for their librarians. The table 8 highlights the most need options for training proposed by librarians to improve information mediation practices in Algerian academic libraries; where we show that most librarians in both categories prefer "Research methodologies and information retrieval strategies" and "Ethics of information mediation practice." as the highest needs. While "Effective communication strategies" and "Artificial intelligence in scientific research" less selected, not because they are well trained on, but they probably prefer to make a solid acknowledged on the practices of information mediation.

Table 9: Librarians' challenges for improving information mediation practices.

| Option | Direct contact with users | Indirect contact with users |
|--|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Information and technology literacy gap. | 14 (21.21 %) | 04 (16.67 %) |
| Limited materials and technological infrastructure | 11 (16.67 %) | 05 (20.83 %) |
| Unclear information needs of users | 15 (22.73 %) | 03 (12.50 %) |
| Limited activities of Information Mediation | 14 (21.21 %) | 07 (29.17 %) |
| Lack of training and professional development | 12 (18.18 %) | 05 (20.83 %) |
| Total | 66 (100%) | 24 (100%) |

Source: Created by author.

Table 9 reveals several challenges faced by librarians at Setif 2 University Libraries in improving information mediation practices. The most common challenges for librarians with direct user contact include unclear information needs of students (22.73%), information and technology literacy gap (21.21%), and Limited activities of Information Mediation (22.73 %). Because new literacies of the Internet and other ICTs are not just new today, they will be newer tomorrow and even newer next week (Coiro et al., 2008), and we need to keep learning to stay ahead (Andersdotter, 2023). On the other hand, librarians without user contact reported similar challenges, but “Unclear information needs of users” was less frequent (12.50 %). This likely reflects the lack of direct interaction with users.

These findings suggest that the library could benefit from training programs for librarians on user needs analysis and communication skills (According to the data presented in the table 8). Additionally, the library should consider acquiring the necessary materials and technological infrastructure to provide information mediation services.

Discussion

This study aimed to explore Algerian librarians' understanding of information mediation practices, their training needs, and the challenges they face to practice effective information mediation. The present research's results showed that:

Information mediation practices and the role of librarians:

Librarians, with or without direct user contact, agree that connecting students to information and information literacy are essential aspects of information mediation. However, librarians with direct contact prioritize information search assistance, while those without direct contact prioritize database training for independent research. Although the concept of information mediation may include both research assistance and information literacy training. In this context (Roe & Moody, 1999), Emphasize that the mediator should prioritize fostering the learner's critical thinking skills rather than simply providing answers.

However, the evolving information landscape have expanded librarian's role as mediators beyond traditional services. Alongside digital library and the open access initiatives, training users to effectively utilize new information tools has become crucial. the significant transformations in information sources have reshaped librarians into a multifaceted roles focused on accessing information from diverse sources. (Solimine, 2014)

Therefore, librarians at Setif 2 University must proactively adapt to the evolving library landscape by implementing innovative and contemporary information mediation practices.

Information mediation methods and skills:

Librarians at Setif 2 University use a combination of Face-to-face interaction, library websites, and social media to mediate information. According to (Sandoz, 2010) There are two main ways to mediate information:

Direct mediation involves a face-to-face interaction between the user and the librarian.

Indirect mediation utilizes a material or immaterial interface, such as technology tools, to facilitate communication between the user and the librarian.

Both forms of mediation aim to help users find and understand information. (Sandoz, 2010) argues that Indirect mediation can only be secondary; Without reception and guidance of librarians, only certain users would be able to benefit from the indirect mediation offered by the library.

To effectively engage in information mediation, Librarians should possess a skill set that combines traditional library science with digital literacy (Lo, 2024b), including an understanding of artificial intelligence and its applications (Michalak, 2023).

Furthermore, librarians at Setif 2 university prioritize strong research and communication skills as essential components of effective information mediation. They also emphasize the importance of promoting ethical information use and digital literacy.

Improving information mediation practices:

Mediation is an indispensable component of the library's mission, all staff should be involved, and librarians must have a good general culture. This will allow him to have a minimum knowledge of the themes covered in the context of his mediation work (Sandoz, 2010). In this study we found that both librarian groups at Setif 2 university prioritize improving students' information research skills as key to successful information mediation. But in reality, librarians need to do more work to translate their existing skills in finding, managing and preserving information and ensuring that students effectively apply these skills (Cox & Mazumdar, 2024).

On the other hand, librarians at Setif 2 University propose multiple methods for assessing the effectiveness of information mediation practices, centering on direct user feedback, student research results, and library usage data. Librarians' understanding of data and statistics puts them in a good position to play future roles (Cox & Mazumdar, 2024).

Training needs and challenges:

Training can lead all staff to get involved in mediation. But we must allowing them access to training and giving them time to acquire a good knowledge (Sandoz, 2010). The librarians surveyed expressed that training in research methodologies, information retrieval strategies, and information mediation ethics are the most important training needs for librarians at Setif 2 University. Grabowsky and Weisbrod corroborate this finding, emphasizing the significant

positive effect of training on the development of research skills and academic performance in undergraduates, graduates, and working professionals (Grabowsky & Weisbrod, 2020).

It is reasonable to anticipate that the skills identified by librarians at Setif 2 University would significantly enhance students in finding, evaluating, and utilizing information ethically. Conversely, future training programs must aim beyond just knowledge acquisition they must equip library professionals with the capabilities to apply AI technologies in their roles effectively (Lo, 2024a). Although training in the field of artificial intelligence might receive less focus currently, perhaps due to existing skills or focus on basic practices. However, AI offers a wide range of potential uses in libraries including to routine information requests or even complex reference inquiries. Digital assistants can also be assigned to answer user queries, explain collections or provide guided tours. Additionally, AI can be employed to gather routine information from users. (Cox & Mazumdar, 2024).

In this study, librarians who interact directly with users reported encountering several challenges including unclear user needs of information, gaps in information literacy, and limited resources. While these challenges are similar for librarians who do not have direct contact, but they have less difficulty in understanding users' needs because they are not dealing directly with students.

Conclusion

This study explored librarians' understanding of information mediation, the diverse practices employed, and challenges faced by librarians at the University of Setif 2. The analysis revealed that librarians regardless their understanding of the concept of "information mediation," actively engage in diverse practices to connect students with information. These activities, demonstrate their understanding of the mediator role. By providing services like search assistance and information literacy training, librarians empower students to not only find information effectively but also develop the critical skills to evaluate and use it responsibly.

Furthermore, by analyzing librarian suggestions in Setif 2 University, the study identified a need for training among librarians, particularly in research methodologies, information retrieval strategies, and information and digital literacy. Additionally, staying informed about advancements in AI-powered information retrieval can further enhance these practices.

Finally, continued collaboration between librarians with different expertise will be crucial. By working together and adapting to the evolving digital landscape, the Setif 2 University Libraries can ensure that students have the tools and skills they need to become effective and ethical consumers of information in the future.

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Author contribution

Abdelghani Bendridi is the only author of this paper. There are no other contributors.

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