EXPLORING THE INFORMATION EXPERIENCE OF THE IMMIGRANT TOWARD PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN NEW YORK CITY

by

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ABSTRACT

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This qualitative exploratory study investigated the experiences, or the lack, of underemployed immigrants with limited job skills, limited income, and limited English speaking skills with public library services as they face many stages of cultural and informational adaptation in the United States. Their information needs are at first primarily for housing, employment, education and social services. In general, they came to the US looking for opportunities, and to be successful. Those achievement means finding good jobs, educations, skills, and greater financial security. Having greater options starts by getting access to information that leads to those objectives.

Public libraries have provided many opportunities to millions of people in the US and, by tapping into individual need for information, library services have benefited communities across the country. US public libraries emphasized services to immigrants as an essential segment of their activities. This was accomplished by offering and providing immigrants with relevant need-based assistance, such as improving their job searching skills and learning opportunities. Services to newcomers are crucial aspects of most public libraries with significant immigrant populations.

While the literature on immigrants in libraries was useful in guiding this research, the focus of those bodies of work did not necessarily address the information needs of under-employed, limited English speaking immigrants who may have or may not have used public libraries. Following two separate pilot studies, I was able to collect survey data for 30 immigrant participants. I then reached out to public librarians who serve immigrants and found they were very accessible online during the pandemic. I recruited 30 public librarians in the New York City area who were asked to take part in questionnaire, interview, and focus group data collection to provide librarian perspectives on meeting the needs of recent immigrants. The data from the immigrant surveys, the librarians' surveys, interviews, and the focus group was analyzed and examined using principles of open coding. I identified 3 categories of desired types of library services, 3 categories of roles that public librarians play in engaging immigrants in their daily lives to meet their information needs, and 3 categories of challenging barriers public librarians face in providing services to underemployed immigrants. The research ends with recommendations for information professionals for improving the service provision models between immigrants and librarians.

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To

My children, Esther and Joy-Anne

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABE	Adult Basic Education
ACS	American Community Survey
AIDS	Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
ALA	American Library Association
ASK	Anomalous states of knowledge
BPL	Brooklyn Public Library
CAQDAS	Computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software
CBO	Community Based Organization
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CETA	Comprehensive Employment and Training Act
CISCO	Computer Information System Company
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
CPS	Current Population Survey
CTC	Community technology centers
DCAS	Department of Citywide Administrative Services (New York City)
EBSCO	Elton Bryson Stephens CO (company)
ELIS	Everyday Life Information Seeking

ESL	English as a Second Language
ESOL	English to Speakers of Other Languages
FDNY	Fire Department of New York (City)
GAO	Government Accountability Office (U.S.)
GED	General Educational Development (test)
GT	Grounded theory
GTM	Grounded Theory Methodology
HHA	Home health aide
HCW	Home Care Workers
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
ICT	Information and communications technology
IDNYC	New York City identification card
LEP	Limited English Proficiency
LIS	Library and Information Science
LISTA	Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts
MRQ	Main research question
NAP	New American Program
NY	New York

NYC	New York City
NYLINE	New York Libraries Information Network
NYPL	New York Public Library
NYPD	New York (City) Police Department
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
PC	Personal Computer
QPL	Queens Public Library
QR	Quick Response (code)
RQ	Research question
TPS	Temporary Protected Status
US	United States
USCIS	U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
UWM	University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee
VPN	Virtual private network

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Personal narrative

As they trailed me on a walking tour of the Central Library, the patrons listened attentively to my presentation, a review of the services and collections offered by the library. As I had done numerous times before in my role as a programming and outreach librarian, I stood in front a group of English-as-a-Second-Language adult learners. I was teaching a module of the information literacy program, which was part of a larger effort to inform these students about the library's offerings, including computer technology classes, immigration and naturalization services, job search training, and health literacy workshops. The students from that group came from half a dozen countries, having left ancestral homelands to come to live in America. In my library, this was an everyday occurrence.

In explaining the valuable resources at their disposal, I remembered when I was in their situation. A long time ago, I was also a new immigrant; I was bewildered and felt overwhelmed by the novelty of this strange library experience. I took full advantage of my local public library once I was introduced to and made aware of those services in the early years after I came to the United States. Using the public library collections and services was helpful both in the mundane and critical choices I made throughout my immigrant journey. This brief immigrant story is an inspiration for this research, which studies immigrants who may never have had to rely on libraries for information before arriving in the United States.

1.2 Background

The Pew Research Center (2019) reports that the number of immigrants living in the United States in 2017 reached a record 44.4 million, or 13.6 percent of the estimated total population of 325.7 million people. If this trend continues, it is projected that the net immigration (the difference between the number coming and the number leaving) of the U.S. population will rise to 46 million in 2060 for a total population reaching 404 million (Camarota & Zeigler, 2019). Those immigrants come from virtually every country in the world, but the most significant countries of origin for U.S. immigrant groups are Mexico (25%), Canada (13%) followed China and India (6% each), the Philippines (5%) and El Salvador (3%). Significant regions of immigrant's origins were Europe (13%), the Caribbean (10%), Central America (8%), South America (7%), the Middle East (4%) and sub-Saharan Africa (4%).

The non-US-born populations are culturally and socioeconomically varied, transforming the U.S. into a multicultural country. Because of this diversity, members of immigrant communities have a range of different job expertise, technology proficiency, and information literacy skills. Within most immigrant communities, people live their lives based on similar bonds they have according to their ethnicity, race, age, and language abilities. As a result, their information experience might be similar. For example, a teen immigrant might feel more comfortable searching for information within their age group and forms strong bonds with other teens who look like them as opposed to an older immigrant adult. Those connections might also form with immigrants of similar socio-economic backgrounds. While some immigrants come to the U.S. from English speaking countries and/or with very advanced job-related skills, others come from countries with less advanced ICT infrastructure and have limited English skills, and thus face the prospect of spending years in low paying jobs. Immigrants with high education and

job skills might “still experience obstacles to effective socioeconomic integration into mainstream society” (Abdi et al., 2019, p. 4). Along with well-educated natives, they fare much better socially as they “dominate the lucrative jobs at the upper tier of the occupational distribution” (Massey et al., 1994, p. 447). However, immigrants with limited vocational skills, limited income, and limited English-speaking skill suffer both from an increasing learning gap, an overwhelming amount of information overload compare with natives and “from lower levels or slower acquisition of US-specific human capital, particularly English language, or from a declining transferability of skills” (Abramitzky & Boustan, 2017, p. 13). Many immigrant groups have members with minimal schooling and limited ability to speak English (Waters & Pineau, 2015). According to Zong et al., (2019), 48 percent of the 44.2 million immigrants ages 5 and older were Limited English Proficient (LEP).

The mode in which immigrants moved to the U.S. is influenced by several factors such as age, education, ethnic status, family structure, and jobs skills (Lee, 2017). This means that immigrants as a whole are often at a different stage of their information experience and have varying needs for everyday life information. Savolainen's (1995) theory of everyday life information seeking (ELIS) represents a way to understand the way people acquire information by looking out how they "orient themselves in daily life or to solve problems not directly connected with the performance of occupational tasks” (p. 267). His theory helps to investigate the information practices of individuals in their quests to fulfil their ELIS needs (Franklin, 2013, p. 53).

Feliciano (2005) believed that the different levels in education among immigrant groups, prior to immigrating to the U.S., led to various educational and socio-economic outcomes for

immigrants and their children. In addition, some immigrants' information practices make them more vulnerable to social exclusion (Haider & Bawden, 2007). A reason for such diversity was the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965. Since 1965, recent immigrants to the U.S. have been mainly from Asia, South America, and the Caribbean, as opposed to immigration from the mid-19th century to the first two decades of the twentieth century, which was characterized by largely European arrivals (Jensen et al., 2015). These diverse newcomers to the U.S. have resulted in immigrant groups with different socio-economic characteristics and information seeking experiences. Once immigrant communities arrive in the US, they spread out across the country. This creates different economic opportunities and leads to an immigrant workforce with a wide range of socio-economic outcomes. (Kritz, & Gurak, 2015; Moyce, & Schenker, 2018).

Public libraries work hard to reduce the marginalization of immigrants living in poverty and to create "opportunities and abilities to retrieve information for a better life and future" (Shen, 2013, p. 9). In addition, they play an essential role in the daily information needs and information seeking of immigrants and immigrant communities (Burke, 2008). For example, public libraries routinely offer non-English computer classes in communities with high concentrations of immigrants who speak a specific native language in order to assist them with job readiness skills.

The goal of most immigrants in the U.S. is to make their lives better for themselves and their families (Clark, 2003). Many immigrants embrace the ideals of the American dream to increase their economic, social, and professional mobility. For Adams (1931), the American dream is:

> That dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement. It is a

> difficult dream for the European upper classes to interpret adequately, and too many of us ourselves have grown weary and mistrustful of it. It is not a dream of motor cars and high wages merely, but a dream of social order in which each man and each woman shall be able to attain to the fullest stature of which they are innately capable, and be recognized by others for what they are, regardless of the fortuitous circumstances of birth or position. (p. 404).

As stated above, such success is not uniform. Immigrants with limited schooling, limited incomes, and limited English-speaking skills live more precarious lives (Waters & Pineau, 2015). As part of adapting to and navigating this new way of life, and learning to engage with the culture of the established population, immigrants need access to information which public libraries are uniquely situated to provide (Fisher, 2004a). Communities of immigrants run into different situations where they are challenged with many issues in which they need information to make decisions (Zajacova, 2002). According to Khoir et al., (2015a), immigrants who come in with sought-after professional skills have an easier time adapting to their new countries and face fewer constraints than those who migrate with fewer skills. Immigrants with lesser job skills, and language barriers are at risk of being information deprived as they can face social exclusion, which in turn makes it almost impossible to find the information they need (Khoir et al., 2015).

Family members and friends preceding new immigrants provide them with everyday life information that informs them about housing, jobs, education, legal services, and health coverage (Caidi et al., 2008; George & Mwarigha, 1999; Shoham & Strauss 2008; Silvio, 2006). With that information, immigrants attempt to construct a new reality. According to Zajacova (2002), “to survive in a new culture, immigrants must come to know the ‘facts’ and the ethos of the society," (p. 69). They need to make sense of their new reality so they can make an informed decision.

Their success will be based on getting additional critical knowledge that will give them a sense that they have control of their way of life and can master their new way of life (Savolainen, 1995).

Information provided to them by people in their close circle is not always accurate and may leave immigrants in the worst possible position. For example, information relying on hearsay might lead to precarious housing situations such as living in run-down neighborhoods. Waldinger (2001) states that these networks feeding immigrants information about locations of ready-to-hire entry-level jobs are not effective at helping limited-skilled immigrants find quality employment (p.107). If immigrants were familiar with public information providers in the U.S., such as public libraries, this could greatly help their everyday life information needs and their long-term success because of the many services libraries make available to meet information needs (Audunson et al., 2011).

The public library has a long history of providing services to immigrants (USCIS, 2010). Since its creation, the American Library Association (ALA) has assisted newcomers in the U.S., although librarians' attitudes toward immigrants have often reflected the prevailing political and economic environment of the majority (Wang, 2012). Historically, public libraries in the U.S. have adopted varied postures in servicing immigrants populations (Jones, 1999). European migration to the U.S. from the mid-1870s to 1940s led many American libraries to take part in the Americanization movements which sought to bring greater influence of the American culture to newly arrived immigrants (Jones, 2004). The ALA Committee on Work with the non-U.S. born, which included leaders such as John Foster Carr, provided resources to librarians in dealing with the needs of different immigrants groups such as Polish, German, Greeks, and Italians. These libraries and librarians offered significant resources and services they deemed appropriate

toward helping newcomers become literate new Americans (Jones, 1999, p. 30). For example, they provided immigrants with reading lists focusing on American history or English literature, and led programs focusing on table manners, social etiquette, and American culture.

The other position adopted by libraries sought to empower newcomers by providing them the resources they wanted. These ideas progressed during the mid-1930s when library leaders such as Abram Boris Korman argued that rather than forcing American culture on immigrants, libraries should adopt a different approach, one that considers the need of immigrants for resources in both their native tongues and English (Latham, 2009). These librarians established international language collections focusing on those immigrants' native languages and set up forums in which immigrants could discuss matters important to their needs. (Latham, 2009). This gradual shift in American libraries' attitudes toward immigrants coincided with these institutions becoming information repositories, and an increasing number of new library patrons had access to information they wanted and needed. This led to the current stance of most American libraries which has resulted in library services taking into greater account the different needs of its multicultural populations.

1.3 Problem statement

Immigrants' perceptions of public libraries are informed by their experiences from their native countries, or pre-migration experiences. Because immigrants' information needs and backgrounds vary, they might not think they need public libraries for a variety of reasons. According to Caidi and Allard (2005), in some societies, immigrants view libraries as a place for the elite, an image of the remnants of colonial powers. In others, libraries as government entities are seen as purveyors of information propaganda and regarded with deep mistrust. The diversity among groups of immigrants means that their attitudes toward publicly funded institutions, such

as libraries, are not the same. According to Smiraglia and Lee (2012), “All human activity takes place in definable social domains, in which people share customs, habits, language, and therefore, also perceptions. Perceptions shape how we comprehend what we know, and therefore, also how we know what we know” (p. 14).

Immigrants’ information needs are diverse and they have different ways of finding information that eluded many scholars (Alam & Imran, 2015; Caidi et al, 2010; Martzoukou & Burnett, 2018; Van der Linden et al., 2014). Groups of immigrants might perceive public libraries positively or negatively based on the experiences of their close friends, family members, co-workers, and other acquaintances, as well as their experiences in their countries of origin. The library and information science (LIS) literature shows that there is a strong emphasis on immigrants’ reliance on social networks (Courtright, 2005). As a result, a lot is going on in the information experience of immigrants, and libraries are but one source of information in their lives. As Aarnitaival (2010) points out, "working life information can be mediated in various ways, which are equally valuable. The medium is not essential, nor is the form of the provided information. The crucial point is whether the information turns out to be useful” (p. 323).

In addition to Savolainen's (1995) theory on everyday life information seeking behavior, which provides ways to understand the challenges those communities face, other frameworks can be helpful in understanding immigrants’ information behavior. Chatman’s research on small communities of diverse backgrounds helps to understand immigrants’ information behavior by using her framework to address their information experience. Her theories on information poverty (Chatman, 1996), life in the round (Chatman, 1999), and normative behavior (Chatman, 2000) illustrate the characteristics of groups of immigrants who rely on close friends and family

members for their information need. They bypass public libraries and form their own small world to meet their information needs (Chatman, 1991b).

Despite the efforts of librarians and researchers, little is known about the various ways immigrants experience and perceive library services (Burke, 2008; van der Linden, 2014; Khoir et al., 2015a; Pilerot, 2018). People's experience and opinion of information institutions are based on how they perceive those institutions. "Individuals' situations and their perceptions of these situations are better predictors of actual information seeking and use of the information systems/sources to solve their problems" (Koo, 2016, p. 315). A clear separation exists between those who can take advantage of those library service and those who cannot, versus those that do or do not know about the advantages of library use. There are indications that some communities of immigrants take advantage of public library services. For example, free conversation-based programs, a popular service for immigrant communities, foster their confidence in integrating into the larger society (Johnston, 2016). Demands for such classes often outweigh the number of available seats (Wu, 2014).

As libraries do not have a single tactic in working with immigrant populations, it is not surprising that few studies have examined the information needs of immigrant patrons. Adult immigrant patrons have different information experiences than young immigrants (Chu, 1999; Silvio, 2006). New immigrant adults (who face the arduous task of supporting their families) often have stronger bonds with extended families back home than established immigrants and send money more frequently (Taylor et al., 2017). The massive immigrant waves resulting from the 1965 Immigration & Nationality Acts affected what are considered gateway cities or popular cities of entry more so than other regions in the U.S. (Donato et al., 2008). However, Lingel (2011, 2015) argues that libraries in these urban cities do not always have a clear understanding

of how immigrant patrons navigate information in their new environment. For example, she argued that immigrants wandered in urban communities in order to orient themselves, and their senses of loss became opportunities to learn about their cities (Lingel, 2015). The adaptation of those immigrants to their new homes is made more difficult as almost 30 percent of those immigrants do not speak English well, and the poverty rate of those urban immigrants is 18.2 percent compared to 14.7 for native-born urban dwellers (Martzoukou & Burnett, 2018; Schaefer & Mattingly, 2016).

Some libraries responded to the needs of disadvantaged communities such as immigrants and other minority groups by promoting more access, such as adding more computers and increasing Internet bandwidth (Kinney, 2010). However, access does not mean equity because those individuals confront "social and economic issues such as access to financial resources, knowledge, and training" (Kinney, 2010, p. 121). In addition, 35% of people in the U.S. whose annual household incomes is $30,000 or less used library resources compared to 12 % for those making $75,000 or more (Horrigan, 2016). Although the price of computers and technology has become more affordable, people with less financial means were still significantly relying on information and communication technology (ICT) services at the library (Lu et al., 2013). The availability and accessibility of the Internet in libraries is a significant reason for the narrowing of the technology gap between immigrants and natives (Comito, 2019). Ono and Zavodny (2007) suggest that it is necessary to differentiate having access to the technology and using it, because having the desire to use technology does not necessarily translate to having the skills. Some libraries have expanded their services to include relevant programming and collection assistance, such as improving their job searching skills and learning English as a second language (Gorham, Bertot et al., 2013). Other libraries offer services facilitating social inclusion such as

passport application, immigration and citizenship processes, and job readiness (Khoir et al., 2015a).

Library and information science has offered sound research on the information experience of immigrant users, providing useful insight into their behaviors, attitudes, and perceptions. Library boards and administrators have put significant effort into addressing the needs of immigrant users by reinventing services, redistributing resources, and hiring a more diverse, multicultural staff. They have created assessments to capture the needs of their newcomers and assist them in making those services more useful to meet their needs. The problem is that new immigrant patrons are more vulnerable because they confront such a drastic change in their surroundings and are presented with new ways to seek information and are not necessarily aware of the potential of public library services. As public libraries have added more resources to help immigrants acclimate to their new environments, their successful services lie in immigrant groups' familiarity with library services. Because communities of immigrants are diverse, there is a risk that significant groups of immigrants might not benefit from the services the public library offers as they have different approaches to seeking information. Compounding this problem is that there exists very little research on the information experience of the immigrant public library nonusers that provide a standard for a framework to address the information needs of a broad group of immigrants who might never have used public libraries. Researching those elusive immigrant nonusers is not an impractical task since a few researchers have done so. For example, Sayyad Abdi et al., (2018) focused on the information engagement of library nonusers and the role of public libraries in Logan City, Australia. They conducted 12 semi-structured interviews with immigrant library nonusers and developed an action plan for public libraries. However, their research sample was small and cannot be generalized to the

broader immigrants' experience such as communities of immigrants in the United States. Lingel (2011) studied the information tactics of urban immigrants who have no connections to information institutions, namely public libraries. Her research included both semi-structured, in-depth interviews, and participatory mapping with twelve participants recruited from an English language learning center in New York City. But half of her participants came from the same country (South Korea) and might not be representatives of broader immigrant communities.

This research seeks to address this phenomenon by looking at the issue with a more diverse set of participants. If not addressed properly, these problems may cause public libraries to ignore an invisible and important segment of a potential group of users in a time where public libraries are advocating for more equity, diversity, inclusion, and social justice.

1.4 Purpose of the study

There are multitude ways in which immigrants access information in their daily lives. Immigrants frequently interact at local places such as ethnic restaurants, coffee shops, and hair salons in their quests to find everyday information, and in these locations, vital information is exchanged through interaction (Caidi et al., 2010). Places where people gather primarily for social interaction help foster a sense of community and invariably will lead to the sharing of information (Pettigrew, 1999). According to Hersberger (2003), new immigrant users' concerns are first and foremost about survival and not necessarily to look for information in libraries. The fact that information is accessible does not mean they know what to look for, where to look for it, or how to find it. Immigrants' close proximity to information venues did not always mean that their information need was fulfilled. Caidi et al. (2010) believes that the library's role in the

everyday lives of immigrants is valuable as it provides a free, open, and social place in which to interact.

The information that many newcomers look for often includes help with housing, education, or employment—all of which are a matter of survival. A significant number of immigrants with limited job skills, limited income, and limited English speaking skills are immigrants who live in urban areas and often include those working as home health aides, cab drivers, or janitors, who are more likely to work long odd-hour jobs (Dramski, 2017). As a result, visiting a public library might not be an option. The demographic characteristics of urban immigrants, such as age, jobs, and education, differ from their rural counterparts (Schaefer, & Mattingly, 2016). Further research on immigrants groups would advance library and information science as it relates to urban public library engagements. Studies would need to investigate the various ways in which immigrants obtained the information they use for their everyday life through library services and their perceptions of such services.

1.5 Significance of the study

While the literature on immigrants in libraries is plentiful, the focus of those bodies of work does not address the information needs of low-income immigrants who may or may not be library users. A notable exception is Burke's (2008) research on the use of public libraries by immigrants. Collecting data from the 2002 Current Population Survey (CPS) Burke found that there was a significant difference between the immigrant group and the native-born household group. Burke pointed out that there is a correlation between library use by different immigrant groups and countries of origin. The study shows that there was a high risk for immigrants from countries with lower literacy rates to shun library services and remain illiterate. Dali (2013a) sees

the crucial role libraries can play in supporting literacy and improve services to immigrant readers by integrating immigrant reading habit preferences which foster a "social supportive network that will encourage immigrant readers" (p. 274).

However, most studies have sought to depict what is similar between immigrants' information needs and information seeking behavior rather than how those needs might be different. For example, Lloyd et al. (2013), made a distinction between information seeking environments for refugees versus other types of immigrants and presented many similarities between the experience of refugees and non-refugees and their interactions with service providers in Australia. Oduntan and Ruthven, (2017), who studied situational information behavior within the context of refugee integration, sought to show the situational experiences of refugees and asylum seekers as they attempted to integrate into their new environments but do not distinguish between those coming from rich or developing countries. Adkins and Sandy's (2017) qualitative and exploratory study sought to investigate the information behavior of Latinos in the Midwestern United States, as related to their web-based technology use. Adkins and Sandy found that the information seeking practices of Midwestern Latinos living in rural areas were similar to those of other immigrants living in urban areas. However, in their study, they did not differentiate between immigrants from Spanish-speaking countries who come to the U.S. with varying levels of information literacy skills. It is not known how different immigrant communities navigate their everyday information need and information seeking behavior in relation to the library services in their information environments. As a result, there is a gap in the literature in which library accessibility for economically challenged immigrant users has been downgraded and receives far less attention than it should. This has resulted in an imbalance as researchers focus on immigrant communities as whole entities, instead of embracing and

accepting their diversity. An explanatory study of diverse views of immigrant communities in the U.S. would be useful.

1.6 Research questions

The overarching research question whose terms are defined in section 1.8 is:

Main Research Question (MRQ), How do libraries serve or fail to serve the information needs of immigrants with limited job skills, limited income, and limited English-speaking skills?

More specifically,

1. **Research Question (RQ) 1**, What are the desired types of library services immigrants' who are underemployed and with limited English-speaking skills would like to see in library services? This question is important because it can help researchers understand the reasons immigrants are not taking advantage of the full services public libraries offer, and why most immigrants are not aware of them.
2. **Research Question (RQ) 2**, What role do public librarians play in engaging underemployed immigrants and with limited English-speaking skills in their daily lives to meet their information needs? This question is asked for public librarians to provide their services to those immigrants' populations which may help public libraries better serve immigrant populations.
3. **Research Question (RQ) 3**, What are the challenges public librarians face in providing services to underemployed immigrants with limited English-speaking skills? The question aims to understand the extent of help immigrant patrons need for public librarians to know which services are needed or might need improvements.

1.7 Definition of terms

A number of terms important to the study are defined below. This dissertation uses LIS and immigration terminologies that need to be defined to explain the way in which each term was used for this dissertation. Some of these terms are used differently in everyday life than they are used in immigration policy debates, and/or academic research. More problematic is that their meanings in the U.S. might be distinctly different than in Canada, Australia, and European, and Asian, countries. In this research, I preferred the use of the definitions in the way they are understood in the U.S.

Asylee: a person who meets the definition of refugee and is already present in the United States or is seeking admission at a port of entry (Homeland Security, 2018).

Immigrant: There is no uniform definition of the term immigrant. The Office of Immigration Statistics (OIS) (2002) defines immigrants as "green card" holders who are lawful residents. However, some researchers have broadened the term to include any non-U.S born person who maintains the status of immigrants once they are in the U.S., while others consider the definition of immigrants includes anyone who immigrated in the past five years (Merenstein, 2008). For the purpose of this study, immigrant is defined as any non-U.S born individual, regardless of their legal status, who came to live in the country.

New immigrant: For this research, I define a new immigrant as any non-U.S born individual, regardless of their legal status, who has lived in the U.S. for up to five years (Caidi & Allard, 2005).

Information need: there is no consensus on the terminology of the definition of the term, but it is extensively used in the LIS literature. The term was coined by Robert Taylor in his

article "The Process of Asking Questions" (Taylor, 1962). For this research, information need is the motivation people think and feel to seek information.

Information practice: "set of socially and culturally established ways to identify, seek, use, and share the information available in various sources" (Savolainen, 2008, p. 2).

Information seeking behavior: The realization by an individual of the existence of an information need and ends when that need is believed to have been satisfied (Krikelas, 1983).

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) individual: a person whose native language is a language other than English and has difficulty to speak, read, write, or understand the English language (https://www.lep.gov/). An LEP individual might be able to converse but have difficulty writing English. Some might not converse in English but can write at some level.

Limited job skill worker: a worker with no high school diploma and or one year or less work experience (Maxwell, 2006, p. 3).

Limited income employment: a job whose worker earns between ages 25 to 64 earns $16 or less per hour (Government Accountability Office, [GAO], 2017).

Public library user: an individual who have visited a public library at least once or more a year (Kim & Little, 1987, p. 10).

Public library nonuser: an individual who "has the right to use the library" but "does not do so" over a year or more (Sridhar, 2002, p. 195).

Refugee: a person outside his or her country of nationality who is unable or unwilling to return to his or her country of nationality because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution (Homeland Security, 2018).

Underemployed: Some researchers have attributed the term pertaining to number of hours a person work, and seeking additional hours (Hussmanns et al., 1990). However, for the purpose

of this research, the term is expanded to include "a state in which a person accepts a lower paying, lower status job than his or her education and experience qualifies him or her to perform" (Rothschild, 2017, p. 415).

Urban: there is no commonly accepted definition of urban because the definition varies by country and region. For this study, urban is defined as a high population city with an administrative boundary "with specific social dynamics, and changes in the natural and built environments"(Deljana et al., 2017, p. 291).

1.8 Research design and methodology

To answer the research questions, an exploratory qualitative case study design was utilized to address the problem because there is no accepted uniform standard by which public libraries can assess a diverse group of non-public library users. A qualitative research approach helps understand how individuals make sense of their daily lives, and how they perceive institutions (Flick, 2014; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). A case study that includes the use of questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups with the aim of collecting data from 40 to 50 participants is appropriate to investigate immigrants' perceptions, experience, and the role public libraries might play in their information experience. The empirical nature of a case study is appropriate to study the proposed research questions because it provides an in-depth perspective of the immigrant library nonusers. Also, employing the case study approach helped describe and explore the phenomena in the main research question (Alpi, & Evans, 2019; Yin, 2017). Several investigations have employed case studies successfully to research immigrants' information experience with public libraries (Silvio, 2006; Shoham & Rabinovich, 2008; Vårheim, 2014; Johnston, 2016; Krueger, 2018).

I used some elements found in grounded theory such as the open coding to analyze data. This approach allowed me to use the data collected to inductively uncover what is going on behind the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). This research followed a constructivist tradition with emerging themes and used three data collection methods to find data that might show the perceptions and attitudes specifically of "underserved immigrants in urban settings" toward public libraries (Creswell, & Poth, 2018). Because it is a qualitative study, I used a context-dependent strategy to present the case of this research and uncover meaning. The data were collected from New York City, and the most diverse city in the continental United States (Gamio, 2019). I conducted two pilot studies, followed by a more comprehensive research with questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and focus groups. I recruited immigrant participants through gatekeepers at immigrant centers (non-profit organizations, places of worship, cultural centers, and public service institutions), and librarian participants through library professional forums, and personal contacts. Interviews and questions elicited rich data that were be analyzed in this dissertation. In research using elements found in grounded theory such as open coding there were similarities in the ways the data collection methods are set up both for the interviews and the questionnaires (Connaway & Radford, 2016). The aim was to arrive at a new conceptual framework for public libraries in their outreach to immigrants.

1.9 The researcher as insider

Public libraries have had a positive impact on my life, and I have hugely benefitted from their services. Those experiences and interactions with public libraries profoundly shaped the decisions I have made in my adult life, my sense of self, and continue to do so-through this research. Both my personal and professional roles influence this research and I am aware of my own potential partiality as a librarian and immigrant. There is no question that the issue may be

raised because of the degree of affinity I have with the population being studied (Chenail, 2011). I am aware of my potential bias, but it did not reduce the quality of this study. In referring to a researcher bias, Rose (1985), stated, " if you do not appreciate the force of what you're leaving out, you are not fully in command of what you're doing" (p. 77). As an "insider" researcher, I remain committed to keep my assumptions in check, and to be open to discovery-oriented inquiry. Among the courses of action, I considered the way in which my library experience, knowledge, access, and power might influence my thought process throughout the research procedure. I maintained reflective journaling and employed multiple data collection methods.

With all my positive experiences with libraries as a new immigrant, I became interested in becoming a librarian. I worked full time and went to library school in the evenings. After graduation, I worked at several immigrant-centered communities, and enjoyed the opportunities provided to me by the library to offer services to those communities. Investigating the experiences of new immigrants with public libraries has both its advantages and disadvantages. There were some challenges in my position as both an immigrant-as-insider and librarian-as-outsider. However, I was able to balance which point of view I was conducting this research from and so as not to led to a conflicting role in the research (DeLyser, 2001). This duality is referred to as insider-outsider. This debate is complex and ongoing in the academic community. For example, Merton (1972) argued that the researcher is both outsider and insider. However, in the researcher-as- insider, the researcher belongs to and share similar background to the group which is being studied while in the researcher-as-outsider, the researcher does not belong to and does not share the background of the group being studied (Adler & Adler, 1987). Unluer (2012) supports the notion that the insider research is advantageous, but also cautions that proximity to the research phenomenon may prevent the researcher from looking at all the angles, and the

bigger picture facing the participants. Unluer (2012) states that both the insider-researcher and participants may make various assumptions. The participants might have assumed that the researcher was already aware of valuable information and may retain critical information. The researcher did not project his experience, overlooked critical information, and bias in interpretations and findings. I acknowledged that there are potentials for such biases but also, I remedied those issues with strong strategies.

In my work as a librarian, my accent and my demeanor have made immigrants at ease when I approach them. This identity lets them know that I am one of them, an insider to their experience, perception, and understanding of public library services. During those exchanges, they often appeared visibly more relaxed, inquired about my immigrant journey, shared their newcomer stories willingly, and asked for advice. This assisted me in my research, as I need to recruit participants and approach gatekeepers for immigrant communities. Insider research implies that the researcher has prior intimate knowledge of a community or its members (Merton, 1972). With research, being an insider also means that the researcher has greater access to those members, which lead to the researcher progressing more freely and intimately within the community (Merriam et al., 2001; Greene, 2014). The insider advantage led to a rich understanding of the issues, and members, and organization being studied, and questions formulated based on the researcher's knowledge and understanding of the issues at stake, which enhanced the research design (Fleming, 2018).

1.10 Dissertation structure

This dissertation is presented in six chapters. Following this introductory chapter, Chapter 2 presents a conceptual framework to study immigrant populations and library services. It explores specific theorists and theories that could better inform the strategies that public libraries utilize to address barriers to the information needs and information seeking behavior of immigrant groups. Chapter 3 describes the methodology that I employed for this study. In addition to an explanation of the research design that I used to answer the research question, I explained the choice and rationale for the research site, the participants' selection, the data collection and data analysis plans. Chapter 4 presented the results of the study. Chapter 5 examined the findings and the implications for public libraries. Chapter 6 summarizes the key findings and opportunities for future research.

1.11 Summary

To use information from libraries, immigrants must know that those library resources exist for their needs. Immigrants might be hesitant to include them as part of their everyday life information when those immigrants might not have been exposed to such services in their native countries, or those services might not have available in the way they are available here. This role in the community is demanding because immigrant groups in the U. S. are diverse and varied. Immigrants' experiences with unfamiliar environments and a new cultural landscape also varies, which influences how they go about finding the daily information they need for lives that often include demanding new responsibilities (Caidi & Allard, 2005; Khoir et al., 2015b). This dissertation explored a specific context which is underemployed immigrants with limited English proficiency. This study used an exploratory qualitative case study design to recruit 60 immigrants and librarian participants to answer the research questions. I developed three

research questions to investigate the challenges facing immigrants who might never have engaged with public libraries.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Boote and Beile (2005) argue that the literature review "sets the broad context of the study, clearly demarcates what is and what is not within the scope of the investigation and justifies those decisions" (p. 4). In this chapter the first goal is to provide an overview of information needs and behaviors research. The second goal is to integrate prior research conducted by information scholars who have investigated the information needs of immigrants and their information-seeking behaviors (Randolph, 2009, p. 3; George & Mwarigha, 1999; Silvio, 2006; Shoham & Strauss 2008; Caidi et al., 2008). The third goal is to address the attitudes and beliefs of communities of immigrants, as they relate to individual immigrant information needs. Finally, I address some of the elements that impact immigrants' perceptions of public libraries. For this context, I consider communities of immigrants (which are heterogeneous) to include all immigrants regardless of their legal statue in the country.

Before going further, it is important to give a definition of information. Information is defined as "something more than data and something less than knowledge" (Boonstra, et al., 2004, p. 7). In the LIS, data is generally defined as the smallest collection of facts, while knowledge refers to as "a cohesive body of information or information that is integrated into a larger body of knowledge" (Rubin, 2017, p. 362). There is no consensus on the definition of information need in the LIS literature, so for the purpose of this study I used Taylor's (1962) definition in which he argued that the basis for information need is based on the "motivation of the inquirer" (p. 395). In the same vein, information seeking behavior is defined as the realization by an individual of the existence of an information need and ends when that need is

believed to have been satisfied (Krikelas, 1983). In this chapter, I examine the elements that inform the nature of individuals' search for information, the action to satisfy such a need, and the complexity of everyday life information experiences. The individual information needs and information seeking behavior is part of a problem-solving process in which the individual seeks a resolution of a problem at hand (Savolainen, 2005). Analyzing the following research helped to better understanding the issues facing marginalized immigrants, and what public libraries can do to address those information need.

2.2 Information Seeking Behavior Theories

It is important to investigate the theories that inform immigrants' information practices so that this study is grounded in a sound conceptual framework. Theories play a strong role in library science research (Pettigrew, & McKechnie, 2001). One of the most influential information science theorist, Krikelas (1983), argued that the beginning of information-seeking behavior is based on an individual realizing they need information and ends when that need is believed to have been satisfied. According to Case (2002), information seeking is part of the umbrella of information behavior. He argued that a wide range of theories of information behaviors and multiple theorists have helped define information-seeking behavior. For Case, no single definition captures the concept of information, and this argument is why multiple theoretical frameworks are reviewed in this chapter. He contended that information behavior "encompasses information seeking as well as the totality of other unintentional or passive behaviors (such as glimpsing or encountering information), as well as purposive behaviors that do not involve seeking, such as avoiding information" (p. 5). Taylor (1968) studied the motives of users in seeking information and the forms such queries take through reference interviews at the reference desk. In this study, I define a library user as an individual who has visited a public

library at least once or more a year (Kim & Little, 1987, p. 10). Taylor described information needs as following a continuum pattern, starting with a visceral need (defined as conscious or unconscious) and moving to a conscious need (which is moving toward a mental state that is cognizant of its need), a formalized need (which can be formally stated but with an air of uncertainty), and a compromised need (based on what questions can be answered). His view that librarians should understand users' motivation behind the information transaction is essential to understanding the process of servicing diverse populations at the library.

Atkin's (1973) analysis of information needs focuses on the notion that human beings need to seek information to attain perfect or complete knowledge. He argued that individuals are in a state of transition, where they compare and look for information that is missing, to manage uncertainty and arrive at a sound state of knowledge. Individual information seeking needs are "a function of extrinsic uncertainty produced by a perceived discrepancy between the individual's current level of certainty about important environmental objects and a criterion state that he seeks to achieve" (Atkin, 1973, p, 206). Case refers to Atkins' environmental objects as "people, things, events, or ideas" (p. 73) that concern or are important to people. Individuals who rely solely on their personal social networks to satisfy their most basic information need can so prolong their information uncertainty by staying with their own sociocultural context.

The cultural norms of individuals (to continually seek information until they arrive at a state of knowledge) are also demonstrated through Kuhlthau (1991, 1993) and her colleagues' psychological theories of learning. Although her theory originally focused on students' information experiences, it was influential in the larger LIS field because of its emphasis on the importance of users' feelings and their problems with information systems during the course of

information searches, which may last “over days, weeks, and even months as they strive to accomplish tasks such as finding a place to live” (Russell-Rose, & Tate, 2012, p. 36). She proposed the six stages of the information search process (ISP) theory, which are as follows: initiation, selection, exploration, formulation, collection, and presentation. Although a detailed explanation of those stages is outside the scope of this paper, it is critical to note that the ISP framework of Kuhlthau (1999) is useful for librarians, because library staff can attend “to the more cognitive and affective attributes of using information for solving problems” (p. 14). Blummer and Kenton (2014), argued that Kuhlthau’s ISP model shows that in designing library services for users, the users feelings should be taken into consideration. In addition, her research demonstrates that “information seeking is a process of seeking meaning or sense-making, not just finding the right answers and sources” (Koo, 2016, p. 316). Kuhlthau’s six stage models will be important to keep in mind to understand the affective, cognitive, and physical elements experience by people as they go through in their information search.

2.2.1 Dervin’s Sense Making Theory

One of the leading theorists of the information search process, Dervin (1999) views making sense as a construct in which the individual bridges the gap between their reality and their perception through ideas, thoughts, emotions, feelings, and memories moving through time-space to form meaning to their experience (Dervin, 1999). For this study, I am adopting Weick’s (1995) sensemaking definition, which is described as a cognitive process in which "people generate what they interpret" (p. 13). Dervin’s theory was influenced by the theory of anomalous states of knowledge (or ASK) developed by Belkin (1980), who studied people as individuals unsure of what they want—therefore, their state of knowledge is continuously updated. For Belkin, people have this gap in their comprehension and will keep looking for a

missing piece of information until it is found. The critical element in ASK is that once the individual perceives a problem situation, it triggers a need for information.

Dervin's sense-making approach is chosen for this research because as a meta theory it goes further than the limited view of information seeking of individual. However these few sentences do not fully explain the comprehensive nature of Dervin's sense making theory. It's important to point out that as a metatheory, sense making describes the process an individual goes through in their daily lives. This process can be understood through larger and overarching contextual frames which can be used to understand their information needs and seeking behaviors. In fact, Dervin (1992) describes sense making as "a set of metatheoretic assumptions and propositions about the nature of information, the nature of human use of information, and the nature of human communication" (p. 61–62). Sense-making theory adds another dimension to information seeking by focusing on a user-centered approach to information seeking as opposed to a system (Dervin, 1983).

While a faculty member at Syracuse University, Dervin developed a user oriented approach while to study information need, seeking, and use (Dervin, 2015). Dervin and Nilan (1986) proposed a "paradigm shift" to refocus attention on the user as opposed to information sources. Sense making is one of the user approach theories which study information behavior from the point of view of the individual (actor). Dervin and Nilan argued that humans have a need to reduce anxiety and insecurity and to make sense of elements in their environment. A core assumption of sense making is that the human information search is ongoing and only stops at moments of discontinuity or *gappiness* "between entities, time, and spaces" (Spurgin, 2006, p. 102). Once those gaps are bridged, the process is resolved as the seeker realizes that sufficient information has been found. The information-seeking process shapes the information

seeker's reality and its meaning, and is a constant in the user's cognitive mind in relation to specific time and space (Savolainen, 1993). As an active process, sense-making fills the gap in a user's world, which for Dervin is "conceptualized as centered and decentered; ordered and chaotic; cognitive, physical, spiritual, and emotional; and potentially differing in all these dimensions across time and across space" (Dervin, 1999, p. 45).

For Dervin (1983), information seeking is part of sense-making. Dervin uses the metaphor of a person walking on a road and finding a hole in the ground to explain her theory. Facing a gap, this person builds a bridge to help them go over the hole. This goes on until another gap is found (Dervin, 1992). At each movement and through time and space, the individual is forced to stop to address those gaps. Each of these steps comprises of the three stages which forms the basis of Dervin's sense making theory (Kari, 1998). The process of sense making theory is often illustrated with a triangle that include situation, gap, and help. For Kari (1998), in the information context, a gap is the information need. The bridge is the information seeking help, and "it is the way in which information helps the individual with his situation" is information use (p. 8).

In library and information science Dervin's theory is critical to evaluate the individual's information need. For example, her theory may help researchers study the kind of gaps users and non-users experience in their perception of library services. Some of the central assumptions of sense making are that:

> Humans and the reality of its existence are both orderly and chaotic, thus the information need of a person or user is not static because humans are always evolving.

Human needs to create meaning, to make sense of reality caused by the absence of continuity.

Humans differ in their experience and observation, so their information needs and seeking behavior are diverse.

The inner and outer worlds of human existence cannot be separated as such information does not exist out there but is constructed in order to address gaps

Sense making in humans are impacted by structural limitation and bound by space and time.

Race, religion, ethnicity do not help predict behavior because it varies within each of those categories and between one another categories. (Agarwal, 2012).

Sense making debunks the idea that information exists independently outside of the individual but is seen instead as "the product of human observation in both physical time-space and psychological time-space (Foreman-Wernet, 2003, p.6). According to Wang (2011), "an information object is not seen simply as an entity that meets or is relevant to an information need. Rather, information embedded in an information object must be conceptualized by the individual in a particular situation in order to influence actions." (p. 18). As a phenomenon, sense-making focuses on the situations that an individual faces, the internal and external gap, the way an individual conceptualizes those situations, and what happens at the end. Devin's (1983) sense-making theory has been used in many disciplines, such as organization systems, education practices, information systems, psychology, communication, and information studies, to address users' information-specific issues. However, as noted by Savolainen (2006), Dervin is vague in her description of the gap-bridging element in her sense making model as it's "not intended as a

literal description of information use" (p. 1120). It is rather intended "as a highly abstract methodological tool, a way of looking" (p. 1120). Although useful, as a theory, sense making does not fully explain the complexity of the social elements affecting members of communities in terms of the factors influencing their information seeking behavior.

2.2.2 Chatman's Theory of Information Poverty, Theory of Life in the Round, and the Theory of Normative Behavior

Chatman's importance in this research is due to her contribution to the study of marginalized communities, and the enduring influence of her work in LIS. She remains one of the most cited theorists in understanding the role of social exclusion, and information theory (González-Teruel & Abad-García, 2018). Some of Chatman's theories (information poverty, theory of life in the round, and the theory of normative behavior) help to appreciate the role of information in immigrants' everyday lives. Chatman (1999) researched the social life of ordinary individuals who lead their everyday existence in the margin (Fulton, 2010). Her research among various populations in the context of their everyday life shows that "cultural and social norms affect the ways people interact with information or ignore it" (Fidel, 2012, p. 53). Chatman found that the social and the working environment of marginalized people, such as janitors, create barriers to their exchange of information. Individuals actively avoided information sources that could help them address their precarious living conditions. Consequently, it is not always true that "accessibility to information determines usage" (Fulton, 2010, p. 242). The lack of equitable access to information referred to by many as "information poor" is an ill-understood concept. It is first and foremost a construct that has been used to show the information gap between people in poor communities. Others refer to the term to indicate at the micro level, the lack of an "individual's cognitive and information literacy

capabilities to process information" (McKeown, 2016, p. 9). That notion might have all started with Childers and Post who tried to determine the type of information that is lacking in disadvantaged populations (Childers & Post, 1975). They believed that disadvantaged populations could not process information. Influential work on "information poverty" by noted scholars such as concluded that people who are "information poor" are suspicious of outsiders, engage in deception to control their lives and perceived the lack of information resources that speak to their needs (Chatman 1996).

Chatman's (1999) second major work, "A Theory of Life in the Round," is based on her study of inmates in a maximum-security prison. She argued that the underlying elements in the information behavior of the members of marginalized communities are the members' interactions within the boundaries of their small world in their search for information. Her life lived in the round theory is about connecting with fellow members of the group and the creation of a support system where information is implicitly understood. Those members, as insiders, are preoccupied with improving their own roles in their world. Such life requires "a public form of life in which general knowledge aids in small learning . . . in which certain things are implicitly understood" (p. 212). The author enunciated four central concepts in her theory: small worlds, social norms, worldviews, and social types. Small world is understood as the connection and the relationship between members of a social network. Social norms are the behaviors members of the small community find acceptable. Finally, worldview refers to their perception of the outside world. The social types are social categories of a ranking system are based on how a member adheres to and conforms to rules. Those elements form the contributing factors to understanding their daily lives, which do not go beyond the mundane.

In "Framing Social Life in Theory and Research," Chatman (2000) argued that social norms and cultural factors impact how people interact with information. Chatman defined normative behavior as "that behavior which is viewed by inhabitants of a social world as most appropriate for that particular context" (p. 13). The attitude toward the norms of the group by the members of the small world helps explain the ways they use information resources and the conditions those behaviors are based on. According to González-Teruel and Abad-García (2018), information is not neutral, but is meaningful because of the value and the norms of a specific world. Those norms affect the flow of information that is unique to the small world of a specific group of people (Burnett, Besant, & Chatman, 2001). People's specific social contexts affects the exchange of information by causing individuals to exhibit acceptable behaviors in the hopes of appearing "normal" to others, while masking their genuine needs.

In her groundbreaking study, "The Impoverished Life-World of Outsiders," Chatman (1996) argued that membership within a particular social group contributes to information poverty. According to Britz (2004), information poverty is "that situation in which individuals and communities, within a given context, do not have the requisite skills, abilities or material means to obtain efficient access to information, interpret it and apply it appropriately" (p. 192). For Chatman, the need for information leads individuals to engage in self-protective behaviors to keep others from sensing their needs. As a result, social norms affect the exchange of information because people exhibit acceptable behaviors that may appear normal to others but hide their true needs. Those social constructs that lead to information poverty happen as insiders seek to conform to the social norms. Consequently, immigrants' self-protective behavior is a response to social norms which led to their information poverty. According to Du

(2016), libraries need to make an effort to understand the way in which their multiethnic and multicultural communities seek information.

Chatman's theory-driven research led her to theorize four themes: deceptions, secrecy, risk taking, and situational relevance that act as attributes of information poverty. For Chatman, deception is the deliberate attempt at portraying a false sense of social reality that is at odds with the one the individual experiences. With secrecy, the individual actively prevents others from "looking in" and therefore closes off any form of engagement. Chatman's (1985) study of 50 women taking part in a Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) program illustrated the risk-taking concept by showing individuals how weigh the usefulness for them to share critical information with others in the program. The higher the risk, the more such information might be hidden.

As an influential information behavior scholar, Chatman investigated the information world of people in small communities from different backgrounds, such as janitors (Chatman, 1987), aging women (Chatman, 1991a), and incarcerated individuals (Chatman, 1999). Chatman provided relevant concepts that may help observers understand the information experiences of marginalized communities such as immigrants, through three of her theories: the theory of information poverty, the theory of life in the round, and the theory of normative behavior. However, her categorizations of those community members as "information poor" are incomplete. Her description might not provide the full picture of the information experience in the lives of the members of those communities. For example, Chatman's descriptions dwell and "focus primarily on the behavior of the marginalized, rather than the vehicles of marginalization" (Gibson & Martin, 2019, p. 2). Her information behavior theory seemed to put the burden of "information poverty on those individuals as opposed to the inflexibility of bureaucratic and

information systems that purport to serve these individuals and communities" (Gibson & Martin, 2019, p. 2). Also, the populations that Chatman's research might have specific characteristics not applicable to other populations. Each of these above populations have specific information needs peculiar to them. For example, small worlds, social norms, worldviews, and social type, all four important aspects of her theory of life in the round, played out in a maximum-security prison. The fabric of the social life in prisons of the women prisoners defined by limited access to information, and the ability to use it is not fully comparable to marginalized populations living outside of boundaries of the prison walls.

2.2.3 Savolainen and Everyday Life Information Seeking (ELIS)

Influenced by Dervin's (1983) sense-making theory (in which individuals make sense of their problematic situations), Savolainen (1995) added another dimension to the user-centered approach to information seeking by arguing that humans need to reduce anxiety and insecurity and to make sense of elements in their environment. Savolainen (1995) built on Dervin's approach and created a new theory to study the everyday life information-seeking (ELIS) practices of individuals to show the association with social, material, and cultural factors.

For Savolainen (1995), ELIS is defined as "the acquisition of various informational (both cognitive and expressive) elements which people employ to orient themselves in daily life or to solve problems not directly connected with the performance of occupational tasks" (p. 267). This is in line with the Khoir et al., (2015a) which defines everyday life information seeking as "the information people obtain through their normal daily activities (such as watching television, meeting a friend and visiting a doctor) when they may not necessarily be purposefully seeking particular information" (p. 89). Savolainen understood the importance of individual human agency but also believed that the field has much to gain by focusing on the

social/cultural context between users and their environment. The findings of Savolainen interviews of 22 subjects (11 teachers and 11 laborers) living in Tampere, Finland showed that close information proximity did not always mean that those individuals took advantage of their environment-rich information context.

For Savolainen (1995), information seeking is impacted by what the author described as a way of life (people's way of thinking and arranging daily activities) and mastery of life (keeping one's life in order) based on social conditioning. Based on Bourdieu (1984)'s concept of "lifestyle," which he calls "system of classified and classifying practices i.e. distinctive signs "(p. 171). Cockerham et al., (1997) states that "lifestyles are a structured pattern of behavior with norms, values, and boundaries, yet through the feedback processes of social agents they are reproduced or transformed over time as people operationalize them. (p.330). Savolainen's way of life framework studied the substantive choices people make every day. The practical choices people make every day are a manifestation of preference of daily activities, which are a mixture of personal choices and external factors that confront individuals. For instance, urban immigrant nonusers who have low skills, low wages, limited English speaking skills, and live within close access to public library services but do not utilize them, might perceive libraries as "not worth the trip" in light of their everyday precarious conditions.

In this study, the researcher defined a library nonuser as a person who "has the right to use the library" but "does not do so" over a year or more (Sridhar, 2002, p. 195). Similarly, a related concept in Savolainen's mastery of life is that people's information-seeking habits are unconsciously self-directed. The ways people self-orient on a daily basis are based on four types of mastery of life: optimistic-cognitive, pessimistic-cognitive, defensive-affective, and pessimistic-affective. The way of life and the mastery of life that form the cognitive and

expressive basis of Savolainen's ELIS theory assist in explaining the choices working class people (e.g., members of immigrant communities) make to not engage with public libraries and look elsewhere for practical information in their daily lives. For Savolainen, the contexts of people's lives are the driving forces that shape the way they view information. Consequently, in the context of public libraries, the ELIS study may show that the frequency of peoples' (such as working class) visits to public libraries may be linked to where they are positioned socioeconomically rather than how much public libraries engage with these communities.

Savolainen's (1995) framework incorporates sociological and cultural concepts. He was careful to point out that his ELIS model applied to the non-work environment. The delineation between where work-related information behavior and non-work-related information behavior begins, and ends is not straightforward as people's information practices are integrated in their daily life. Actually, Savolainen (1995), sees a "false dichotomy between processes of job related and 'other' information seeking because job-related information seeking, and ELIS complement each other" (p. 266). However, the ELIS model puts the onus on the individual and does not fully account for the pervasive influence of group conformity in people's search for information. Also, the cause and effect in the information seeking element in Savolainen's mastery of life is not fully explained in relation to cultural factors that might influence a person's information search. It can be concluded that potential library users who do not respond to libraries outreach efforts might be influenced by social and cultural factors, in addition to individual issues.

2.2.4 Summary of theoretical factors influencing immigrants information need

As stated before, theorists have presented different views in their attempts to understand the information needs, seeking, and use of individuals (Case, 2002). In addition to those presented above for context of this research, the information filed has a rich literature presenting very complex epistemological perspectives with applications in diverse fields (Fidel, 2012). Case (2002) spoke of a spectrum of the ways in which scholars make assumptions that describe people's motivation for seeking information. On one end of the spectrum, scholars in the positivists' camp argued that knowledge resides outside of people's minds reflecting an experience that is objective (Erickson, 2019). Those scholars point to the role and the influence of cognition, and emotion in the information-seeking process. It's an important element in understanding people's information experience. In addition to the affective and the cognitive aspects to understand what drives humans to seek information exemplified by the work of Kuhlthau (1999), my view is that the social constructivist approach, on the other end of the spectrum, led by Dervin (1999), Savolainen (1995) and Chatman (1985, 1996, 1999) provide a better understanding of the information experience of individuals as their human activity is interconnected to their environment. For Koo (2016), "everyday information practices studies using social constructionism have advantages in terms of understanding information practices of less advantaged groups such as socio-economically, culturally, geographically, physically marginalized and vulnerable groups" (p. 324). Understanding the theories that are relevant to the information need of immigrant populations is essential to researching the information seeking of those populations. My research is situated in a constructivist tradition as I sought to understand the participants' perception and meaning in this study. Individuals "develop subjective meanings of their experiences-meanings directed toward certain objects or things" (Creswell, & Creswell, 2017, p. 8). The social constructivist approach focuses on the way individuals understand their situation. Those scholars believed that all "users want, need, and

use information" (Gray, 2003, p.259). However, their information search is not accidental but very much part of a continuous life experience. With a constructivist lens, I sought to uncover those socially negotiated subjective meanings. Activities people engage in before making a choice, both mundane and meaningful, are based on their available information. What they do with this information might be insignificant or consequential, but in people's daily lives, "information has become one of the most integral elements" (Howlader & Islam, 2019, p. 1). LIS scholars have an increased interest in researching the everyday information need and seeking behavior of immigrants through a social constructivism lens. Research in information studies helps to identify and comprehend the different elements involved in the information process so that better information services can be created. Similarly, this is why my research is essential to understand individuals' information needs and information seeking behavior. This research falls within the overall library and information science framework, which have underscored the complexity of factors affecting human information need, information seeking behavior, and use (Case & Given, 2016).

2.3 Information Needs and Behaviors Research of Immigrants

In addition to Dervin, Savolainen and Chatman are two other leading researchers in the information behavior community, and their theories provide some the theorical framework for this research (González-Teruel & Pérez-Pulido, 2020). The notion of gap in Dervin' sense making theory is important to understanding the information marginalization experience of immigrants in the way it "renders them unable or unwilling to bridge these gaps because of sociocultural, political, and economic barriers and a sense of insecurity and instability that hinders their advancement toward integration" (Bronstein, 2019, p. 31). Savolainen's (1995) theory on everyday life information-seeking behavior provides a way to understand working

class immigrant perceptions of library services. Chatman's theoretical models such as information poverty (Chatman, 1996), life in the round (Chatman, 1999), and normative behavior (Chatman, 2000) illustrate the disadvantaged communities' information behaviors. One way those two scholars (among other scholars) intersect in their information behavior research is their view on the way people environments and contexts affect their information behavior (Huvila, 2019).

The information use and information seeking behavior of immigrants are different than those of the long-term U.S. residents as it is a unique context facing immigrants in a new culture who look for information for a sense of belonging (Du, 2016, p. 65). As newcomers, immigrants experience their urban environment in a position of unfamiliarity (Lingel, 2011). In their research of international students adjusting to their unknown environment, Oh et al., (2014) argued that:

> In an unfamiliar geo-spatial environment can be seen as a specific type of information behavior, framed in the space of unknown environments. Wandering around may involve complex information practices of intentionally learning geo-spatial information, leisurely scanning the environment, and accidentally finding relevant information. (p. 9).

Such unfamiliarity causes uncertainties. Those uncertainties can be a reason to look for information.

LIS researchers refer to information gaps as information needs (Blummer, & Kenton, 2014, p. 14). People move through time and space to face another human being, system, or institution. According to Foreman-Wernet (2003), an individual is a “body-mind-heart-spirit moving through time and space, with a past history, present reality and future dreams or

ambitions" (p.7). As a result, the information need is not static; the system or institution that interacts with individuals has to take such factors into consideration. For example, the newcomers try to make sense of their circumstances but are unable to bridge their prior information experience which led to a gap. The value that immigrants bring in considering public library services is not divided between "information, information search, or information seeking" (Solomon, 1997, p. 1128). Various elements come to play in the way people look for information. It's a dynamic process that immigrants employed different strategies in their search for information in their daily lives that they may consider as routine. I regard the way immigrants capture and provide meaning of their situation as following a set patterns set in Dervin's sense making theory.

In his findings of individuals participating in a work planning process (WPP), Solomon (1997) argued that in the sense making process individuals have their own unique style based on instincts, personality, learning styles which lead them to act in a specific way. He sees the patterns of information behavior of individual as dynamic and non-linear because time and space interact until the information need is satisfied, no time is left, or a unique set of circumstances occurs. Also, borrowing from Chatman, he argued that individuals exhibit a set of protective behaviors based on deception and secrecy because of the risks and the relevance of the "roles, norms, and task requirements" (Solomon, 1997, p. 1136).

In sense-making theory, communication is a procedure that helps individual users express themselves and in which a researcher can investigate the "context" and the "situation," which include barriers (Dervin, 2005). For libraries to understand people's information needs, staff members need to understand the communication framework of a diverse population's sense-making process. An example of a study that libraries could use to illustrate how an immigrant's

information needs change across time is the qualitative study by Sirikul and Dorner (2016). They investigated information needs, sources and barriers to settlement by Thai immigrants living in Auckland, New Zealand. After looking at the general literature on information need, information sources, barriers to immigrants, and the role public libraries play in meeting their information need, the authors used Mwarigha's (2002) three stages of settlement (immediate, intermediate, and long term). The first stage begins with the immediate needs for assistance and reception services, such as food, clothing, and shelter. In the middle or intermediate stage, immigrants require assistance with access to institutions for housing, health services, legal assistance, and employment. Finally, immigrants wish to be "equal participants in the country's economic, cultural, social and political life" (Mwarigha, 2002, p. 9). The first two stages, critical for their survival, are marred by significant barriers when immigrants seek information.

Sirikul and Dorner (2016) also studied Thai immigrants in Auckland and showed in all stages, the leading sources providing information during settlement were family members, friends, and the Internet. The participants appreciated what the Auckland Libraries had to offer, but they still did not take full benefit of the library's services. The main culprit in blocking the receipt of assistance were the language barriers, the absence of aids in their native language, the lack of time, and the way the library staff interacted with them. Dervin and Nilan's (1986) study was also used to investigate the perceptions of immigrants and the public library's role in providing access to settlement information. They employed Dervin's "micro-Moment Time-Line interview approach […] to gain an understanding of the situations Thai immigrants experienced and the barriers they encountered, and to identify facilitators that could help them overcome those barriers" (p. 540). This paper supports the findings that the barriers encountered during the settlement process for Thai immigrants include English language

proficiency issues, the Thai people's view that reading is not a leisure activity, the dearth of access to Thai materials, the lack of time because of work commitments, and a lack of awareness of the range of services provided by the library.

Caidi and Allard (2005) examined the issues facing newcomers and established immigrants in Canada. They argued that immigrants were vulnerable to social exclusion because of the risk that they would end up on the social periphery and thus become information poor. Among the critical elements in immigrants' information needs were the following: making usable information culturally meaningful to them, facilitating access to content in languages other than the two official languages of Canada (English or French), establishing outreach to the community, and providing information literacy programs. According to the authors, newcomers' diverse backgrounds and different experiences with information, technologies, and institutions such as libraries, contributed to immigrant information poverty because these social and cultural institutions have specific processes, practices, and interactions that users find difficult to navigate due to a lack of previous exposure. The term newcomers "includes various categories of immigrants who are born outside of the United States" (U.S. Department of Education, 2016 p. 3). Su and Conaway (1995), in referring to the priorities of newcomers argued that:

> Newcomers, in their first years in the United States are trying to service and such their priority need is different. Their "personal information needs, health information needs, and family information needs are different. Their priorities were information about 'places to go and things to do,' preventative healthcare, family recreation, shopping, real estate information, education, and religion." (p.81).

In contrast, McKeown (2016) argues that information poverty is a complex and non-binary concept encompassing those who know where to find information and those who do not, as well as other factors that are social, political, economic, cultural, and personal. McKeown used Chatman's information poverty theory to demonstrate how the lack of vital information impacts a wide range of factors in users' lives, such as social, educational, personal, cultural, and economical issues. Information poverty is the result of the barriers that patrons face, which impact their skills and ability to use the information to increase their standard of living. The author argued that three theoretical frameworks were involved in information literacy indicators: macro (strategic), meso (community), and micro (individual). McKeown's investigation illustrated how library services provided by staff at different levels could impact a wide range of users (such as immigrants) by fostering a better understanding of the informational gap and attitudes of socioeconomically deprived groups. The study is significant in that the holistic framework of this study can be applied not only to library users in Northern Ireland but also to wide variety of information needs and contexts, including the immigrants that is be the primarily focus of this research.

2.4 Influence of Immigrants' Networks and Information Needs

Scholars who studied information needs of immigrants have uncovered patterns in their information needs (Beretta et al., 2018). The focus of these research studies are diverse and have turned to the pragmatic need of immigrants in their new landscape. Although the concept of information seems like an abstract concept, the issues immigrants face in their new countries are real and tangibles. For example, Shoham and Strauss' (2008) study of United States immigrants' information needs of those settling in Israel included housing, schooling, health, driving, banking, legal issues, work and language. Other scholars have made similar findings such as

food and water (Mwarigha, 2002), housing (Chu, 1999), health care (Courtright, 2005), banking (Shoham & Strauss, 2008), employment (Caidi et al., 2010).

Often because libraries are traditionally associated with books, nonusers might not realize that libraries offer a wide range of services that those non-visiting individuals might want to use to better their lives (Levien, 2011). The underutilization of public libraries by this group in a local community can also be understood as their reliance on friends and families who have preceded them in their new land. The social network of immigrant communities tends to replicate the social world of their native countries (Khoir et al., 2015b). As users and potential users of public libraries, immigrants rely on interpersonal social networks as their primary source of information (Courtright, 2005; Komito & Bates, 2011; Qayyum et al., 2014). Situational relevance, a concept influenced by Devin's (1983) sense-making, deals with the way in which individuals perceive information's usefulness in its everyday life application. In the immigrant communities' case, the more such information is shown to be pertinent to their needs, the more useful it is to those members of such communities.

Hassan and Wolfram's (2019) study of the information behaviors of African refugees living in an urban area in the Midwest in the United States also relied on the ELIS model. The investigators recruited 26 participants with data collection methods that include questionnaires, interviews, and focus group. After collecting and coding the data, the investigators found that the refugees' information needs were exhibited as complaints instead of legitimate information concerns or problems, and were focused on housing, health care, employment, and education. In addition, Hassan and Wolfram found that although the participants were not always satisfied with the information they found, through the help of their caseworkers they were gradually able to expand their network and their information sources and behaviors.

Similarly, Khoir et al.'s (2015b) mixed-method study employed Savolainen's everyday information behavior framework to explore Asian immigrants' information behavior in South Australia. The researchers used e-mail networks and snowball sampling to recruit 16 Asian immigrants to research the types of information Asian immigrants need, how they seek information to satisfy their everyday needs, where they meet, and how they share information. After using questionnaires, photovoice (a method that incorporates photography), and interviews to collect data, the investigators' analyzed the data through a combination of statistical analyses, descriptive analyses, and inter-coder reliability tests. Among the findings, Khoir and colleagues discovered that personal networks play a role in helping newcomers adjust with language, culture, lifestyle, social norms, and various sorts of information needs.

2.4.1 Information Ground

Information behavior of immigrants in unfamiliar environments can also be understood through the information grounds theory. Pettigrew (1999), now publishing under the name Fisher, explained that the information grounds theory is used in social settings where information is exchanged among those present. Small places in the community where immigrants frequently interact, such as ethnic restaurants, coffee shops, and hair salons, are locations where important information is exchanged through interaction. Fisher defined an information ground as "an environment temporarily created by the behavior of people who have come together to perform a given task, but from which emerges a social atmosphere that fosters the spontaneous and serendipitous sharing of information" (p. 811). Fisher et al. (2004a) shed light on the notion of the information ground approaches used to investigate the needs-based information services for Queens's immigrant population in New York City. As an information

ground, the library's English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes became a "synergistic environment" that led to personal gains through the sharing of information. The authors focused on the information used in social interactions to create an atmosphere where individuals could informally share information; focusing on certain topics led to improved coping skills and increased proficiency in English. For example, the Queens Library literacy programs are instrumental in building immigrants' technological skills and increasing their senses of self-worth, reducing their information poverty. Even the low literacy contexts in ESOL information ground situations provided immigrants with a safe environment, where information literacy can lead to lifelong learning. Conversation-based programming in libraries help immigrants by providing an opportunity for immigrants to practice their language skills and connect them to the larger majority (Johnston, 2019). The implication is that many places other than libraries can be considered information grounds such as cafes, barbershops, public parks which mean that immigrants have multiple venues for information gathering.

2.4.2 Immigrants' Gatekeepers

As a result of limited English proficiency, immigrants rely on gatekeepers who serve as translators and intermediaries for their information needs. According to Agada (1999), these gatekeepers, whom he called "information intermediaries who move between cultures, linking their community members with alternatives or solutions" (p. 75) are "usually individuals who have a high information potential; a greater awareness of and use more information resources than do other community members, irrespective of employment status, educational level, income or longevity in the community" (p. 75). Case (2002) states that "gatekeepers provide a key link between their organization, audience, or community and the outside environment" (p.300). Chu (1999) investigated the role that immigrant children mediators (ICMs) play in helping their

parents in their information environment. The study showed the struggles of those communities, as the author sought to understand the types of information-seeking behaviors of the ICMs and the weight put on them to facilitate those tasks. The author argued that the poor English skills of parents and their lack of information literacy were contributing factors to the parents' inability to represent themselves. Chu's qualitative research was conducted with 77 immigrant children, of which 37 were Korean Americans and 40 were Mexican Americans. The interviews consisted of discussions about ICMs' personal backgrounds, mediation activities, information mediation, and cultural mediation. The linguistic minorities lacked direct access to crucial information in English and, having to rely on their children (who do not always feel the need to share all obtained information), constituted a type of information poverty. Furthermore, the primary sources of information were individuals, the phonebook, and the media—not public libraries. The lack of information literacy from both the ICMs and their parents increased the social gap between those immigrant groups and more fluent English speakers.

By helping communities gain access to resources, the ethnic gatekeepers' role may be positive, negative, or neutral in immigrants information seeking. Metoyer-Duran (1991) studied ethnolinguistic communities (i.e. communities defined by their language) and found that gatekeepers (i.e. information providers to immigrant communities) are essential to their communities' information needs because of the range of sources linking their local communities with the larger dominant group. As a result of the trust given to them by the immigrant community, ethnic gatekeepers that maybe bilingual and bicultural, and function between two or more linguistic communities (such as between the dominant language group and the native language of the immigrant communities). For Metoyer-Duran, a gatekeeper maybe an impeder, broker, unaffiliated gatekeeper, affiliated gatekeeper, information professional, and/or

leader/executive. The impeder is a gatekeeper who limits the amount of information to be shared and functions in a negative manner. Although not a professional or manager, a broker is one who facilitates the sharing of information, frequently belongs to voluntary organizations, and for libraries "represent an optimum target for information-providing agencies" (p. 336). An unaffiliated gatekeeper does not represent a specific institution, acts in a neutral manner toward information environment, and collect information to distribute to their communities. The affiliated gatekeeper may represent a non-library institution, a local non-profit institution, an agency, or may be professionals with access to their communities such as ministers or social workers, who are in a position to incorporate and disseminate information to communities. The information professional includes the librarian who provides expert knowledge. Finally, the leader/executive are as elected officials who play a visible role in helping bring about change in the community. Metoyer-Duran's taxonomy illustrates the role of gatekeepers' impact as information agents to marginalized communities. Her study of immigrant groups was used to point out the patterns of gatekeepers' information needs, information-seeking behaviors, and their role as information disseminators. Understanding the role of gatekeepers to their communities can help libraries improve their services in a way that addresses the needs of the immigrant community.

Because information from ethnic gatekeepers to their communities can be sifted and repackaged, it may deprive immigrants of critical information as gatekeepers choose when and how information will be shared. For example, children of immigrants do not always share pertinent information with their parents (Chu, 1999). In Chatman's small world theory, insiders decide what information is needed, and what information is acceptable. These information proxies may prevent libraries from addressing social stigmas and cultural taboos

that lead to prejudices and "restrict information seeking from human sources in particular" (Savolainen, 2016, p. 3). For Savolainen, such a barrier affects several groups of individuals such as those with HIV/AIDS, information seekers belonging to sexual minorities, or family dynamics where members face mental illness. For Chatman, the members see the need to fit in their sub-group. For other scholars, immigrants' use of libraries can be seen as an escape from their own paternalistic cultural upbringing. For example, Berger (2002) framed public libraries in Denmark as "refuge of integration" and asserted the following:

> For the girls, the library is a place of refuge, a legitimate sanctuary outside the family. In some of the more conservative ethnic communities, opportunities for girls to participate in social activities are limited compared with those for Danish girls. Apparently, the libraries have become an alternative, a respectable place, where minority parents allow their daughters to stay unsupervised. In the observations during our research, it became apparent that the girls appreciated the libraries as places of refuge where they meet friends, flirt innocently with boys, or chat on the Internet, free of the often severe social control exercised by parents or relatives. (p. 83).

Promoting public libraries as safe, non-threatening environments is inviting to members of the communities who do not have such rights in their closed circle in America. Furthermore, what might be perceived to library staff as language intermediaries speaking on behalf of fellow family members during library service transactions may just be an example of sociocultural norms taking place right in front of the librarian. However, immigrants might have reasons to be suspicious. According to Ruokolainen and Widén (2020), immigrants have been fed misinformation at times in the process of relying on gatekeepers. Thus, they are victimized

because of exposure by gatekeepers to "information giving false hope or unrealistic expectations, rumors and distorted information" (Ruokolainen & Widén, 2020, p. 11)

2.4.3 Immigrants' Information Challenges

Immigrants' access to information can be disrupted by a range of challenges. I have already shown that immigrants rely heavily on interpersonal social networks as their primary source of information. However, there are still significant barriers preventing immigrants from accessing information that would be beneficial in their daily life. Immigrants who use public libraries value the institution as indispensable places for their information needs and understand the benefits that libraries provide in their lives (despite many not having had access in their home countries). Libraries provide a variety of offerings to new immigrants, such as multilingual collections, links to government resources, ESOL and citizenship classes, and job-related workshops. These can help address what Savolainen (2016) identified as obstacles facing information seekers and the impact the process has on their lives. He cited those obstacles as physical or immaterial, internal (affective and cognitive), or external (spatial, temporal, or sociocultural). He found six types of sociocultural barriers through his examinations of research articles in the Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts (LISTA) database, e-journals, magazine subscriptions, EBSCO information services, and the Annual Review of Information Science and Technology (ARIST). Those barriers are "barriers due to language problems, barriers related to social stigma and cultural taboo, small-world related barriers, institutional barriers, organizational barriers, and barriers due to the lack of social and economic capital (Savolainen, 2016, p. 52).

Basic language skill is a pressing matter for immigrants coming from a non-English speaking country (Beretta et al., 2018). "The average literacy proficiency of the nation's

immigrant population is considerably below that of their native-born peers in the U.S" (Sum et al., 2004, p. 1). Although literacy is also an issue affecting other marginalized English-speaking communities, the lack of proficiency in the common language of the dominant group overwhelmingly affects non-English speaking immigrant communities. According to Savolainen (2016), one of the major barriers for immigrants as information seekers is the language problem. Their inability to speak English has led to segregated communities that divide these groups from mainstream American society. Among immigrants' common requests at libraries, is for survival information, such as that from ESOL classes, English language materials, and job-related data. In researching the ways in which immigrants interact with their local libraries, Rho (2002) researched the information-seeking behavior focused on first-generations Koreans in the Dallas area. This study found that Korean organizations, not necessarily libraries, actively supported their integration in the area, leading to limited information sharing. Rho's investigation (as other ethnolinguistic studies of communities have also illustrated, including Fisher et al., 2004(b); Caidi & Allard, 2005; Silvio, 2006; Caidi et al., 2010; Quirke, 2012, Khoir et al., 2015a; Atiso et al., 2018) showed that these immigrants relied mainly on their closed networks as sources for information. A recurring area of concern for the immigrants was how to locate language instruction classes because of their inability to speak English, their unfamiliarity with their new land, and their reliance on informal channels. However, they did not consider libraries as institutions that could provide them with the information services they might need. Consequently, other organizations more integrated to immigrant communities stepped in to provide such services.

2.4.4 Information Poverty

As stated earlier, as users and potential users of public libraries, immigrants rely on interpersonal social networks as their primary source of information. The fact that those immigrants often bypass institutions such as public libraries in their quest for information, coupled with the lack of direct access to information environments, this has led scholars to conceptualize their information exposure while in a state of information poverty. Childers and Post (1975) are some of the earliest researchers to study the notion of information poverty. The authors' research has served as a reference for information poverty research, and it attempted to determine what kind of information is absent from economically disadvantaged groups in the marginalized communities in the U.S. Funded by the U.S. government, their report looked at areas of information needs of these populations such as health, education, law, employment, recreation, transportation, consumer affairs, housing, welfare programs, political process, transportation, and leisure and a few others. The researchers concluded that low information processing skills were a determining factor in information poverty. As a result, the marginalized saw themselves as not fitting in with the rest of the larger society.

It is worth nothing that not all LIS scholars agree with the notion that marginalized communities such as immigrants are information poor. Some scholars have argued that immigrants face a potentially overwhelming abundance of information choices (Bawden & Robinson, 2009). Ndumu (2020a) argued that "in the twenty-first century, immigrants have considerably greater and perhaps even overwhelming access to information" (p. 18). However, those immigrants are "disconnected or isolated from information upon settling into a new country" (Ndumu, 2020a, p. 18). The perception that immigrants are information poor and the discourse that they are information deprived creates the conception that there is “a minimum

capability required to participate in the information society" (Barja Daza & Gigler, 2007, p. 24). Haider and Bawden's (2007) study used a loosely Foucauldian discourse analysis method to investigate the notion of information poverty of users in LIS. Based on thirty-five English language articles published in scholarly and professional LIS journals between 1995 and late 2005, the authors retrieved articles on the concepts of information poverty or the information poor. According to their research, the most dynamic themes and measures deduced from the study were economic determinism, technological determinism, historicism of information poor, and an emphasis on librarianship's moral obligation and responsibility. For the authors, the objectification of the information poor to a group of people assumed that there was a right kind of information literacy. Linking information and poverty implied the possibility that information was seen as a precarious and a tangible good with an economic connotation. Other studies have shown that many immigrant groups (both first-generation immigrants and second-generation immigrants) desire only "partial integration" in order to maintain relationships with their home countries and primary links to their culture (Ward-Lambert, 2014). Immigrants are not necessarily as "informationally lacking," as it might be led to believe. Talja and Lloyd (2010) summarized this by stating that "the term 'immigrant' is politically correct if it is accepted and used by immigrants themselves; but can the term 'information poor' ever be politically correct?" (p. 325). Therefore, immigrants might have a different lens in looking at public institutions and bureaucracy.

2.4.5 Perceptions of Immigrants about Information Needs

Immigrants' perceptions of public libraries are influenced by a range of factors. In addition to the public library perception mentioned elsewhere in this research, it is worth mentioning Van der Linden et al.'s (2014) research. They investigated the perspectives of recent

immigrants in the Canadian context and asked them directly about their needs and experiences. The three focus groups for this study, with 14 participants, dealt with several topics such as their first visit to a library, collections, library use, awareness of programs and services, and their impressions of the library staff. Among the findings, the researchers discovered that the transition to being an immigrant is one aspect of an individual information experience because other factors affect their perception of information such as whether they have used a public library or not in their home countries, their motivations for seeking information (Internet access, languages and children collection, information about their city) and their need for the library (parents, entrepreneur, voter, leisure reader, and student). However, immigrants perceived the amount of information in their new adopted countries as overwhelming and thus may suffer from information overload (Ndumu, 2020a). Also, for Shepherd, et al. (2018), immigrants perceived libraries as intimidating places. Those who decided to use the libraries were prompted by close family and friends, and ended being regular library users. They perceive libraries as "safe, socially acceptable places to relax, study or meet other people" (Shepherd, et al., 2018, p. 593).

Khoir et al.'s (2015a), study of immigrants in Australia concluded that as immigrants realized that they need new ways of finding information, they relied on informal channels such as family members and formal channels such as the public libraries; "online social networks, such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, also became important information grounds for immigrants" (p. 94). Public libraries were perceived positively as places to meet new friends, borrow books for their children, enroll in English classes, and participated in programs. However, they noted that immigrants' use of libraries was limited. Sirikul and Dorner's (2016) study of immigrants revealed that among the participants with limited proficiency stated that they were driven to the library for English as Second Language classes. Some of their significant

needs were finding a job or a better paying job or using the library to find other employment. Among the participants who did not use public libraries regularly or at all, they indicated a lack of interest or time as the reasons for not engaging with public libraries. Finally, other studies (Kong, 2013; Witteveen, 2016; Branyon, 2017) have shown that immigrant families with young children view public libraries positively. They perceive libraries as a safe place, a free place for learning and culture, and an institutions that helps improve their lives either because they did not have access to it in their home countries, or that access was very limited.

2.4.6 Immigrants' Digital and Technological Issues

The social relationship between members in Chatman's small world barriers, and Savolainen's ELIS social concepts may lead to social and economic disparities which result in limited access to digital resources, both at home and in public places (such as public libraries). Ono and Zavodny (2008) state that "immigrant households have lower literacy rates and less wealth, on average, creating additional barriers to IT usage"(p. 4). Such lack of access may slow their integration and create a technology divide between them and the dominant group. However, there is a growing argument being made in the LIS literature about the idea of merging immigrant communities with low IT skills and low English proficiency because there is a "tremendous range in immigrant types, origins, and personal narratives; not all immigrants are forcefully displaced, non-English speakers, uneducated, low skills nor even people of color" (Ndumu, 2020b, p. 76). This narrative does not provide a full picture of the complexity of the information experience of immigrant communities.

According to Pedrozo (2013), immigrants lack the needed technology skills and the access to crucial resources to better their lives. Those who come to libraries might need more

access to the library computer terminals for technology classes. However, as more computers are installed in public libraries this can also increase demand. Latham (2002) argued that "while technology has increased our budgets, it has also increased public expectations. While it has made libraries and their services much more visible, it has also become visible to [more] segments of the population" (p. 393). Alam and Imran (2015) claimed that government Internet services were important aspects of social inclusion for immigrants and refugees. Also, they stated that not all members of immigrant populations have access to Internet, and that one lack of access to the Internet was a consequence of its high costs for these populations. Consequently, access to technology hampered the social inclusions of these populations. That is why "librarians should be aware that there can be digital divides along linguistic lines, as well as the more commonly cited divisions of race, class, gender, and education" (Valentine, 2008, p.199).

Scholars such as Van Deursen and Van Dijk (2011) have spoken about more than one digital divide between those who can use technology and those with limited access, thus furthering the already significant gap. For Van Dijk and Hacker (2000) four types of barriers results in the inequality of information and computer technology (ICT) which are:

1) Lack of any digital experience caused by lack of interest, computer fear and unattractiveness of the new technology ('psychological access');

2) No possession of computers and network connections ('material access');

3) Lack of digital skills caused by insufficient user-friendliness and inadequate education or social support ('skills access');

4) Lack of significant usage opportunities ('usage access'). (p.1).

For Gasser and Palfrey (2008), if the digital divide is a critical issue, it does not tell us the full story because the “harder issue arose when you realized that access to the technologies is not enough” (p. 15). They observed a vast divide between the “digital native” who is proficient with ICT and those who are not as well versed. This has resulted in a growing gap that has led to new forms of inequities so vast that those people refrain from using technologies altogether, even if they may have access to it. Public libraries play an important role "in helping new immigrants connect easily into the society" (Lin & Boamah, 2019 p. 582.). Therefore, connecting immigrants to the larger society by means of computers in libraries is vital. Public libraries are one of the few locations low skills immigrants have access to technology (Bertot et al., 2006). Identifying the information-seeking behavior of immigrants and factors hampering electronic information access to those populations could potentially help the way in which libraries provide outreach and engage with immigrant groups.

Diaz Andrade & Doolin's (2019) study of 53 refugees who shared their experiences of ICT use in New Zealand found that using ICTs helps individuals exercise a degree of control over their new environments and make it possible for their participation in society. For the authors, ICT use becomes "a vehicle with which they can exercise agency in regaining control over their everyday lives (Diaz Andrade & Doolin, 2019, p. 22). Implementing policies aiming to build digital skills among refugees and immigrants is critical to fostering their well-being. Diaz Andrade & Doolin highlight eight types of ICT use, such as" learning about a new environment, keeping informed, transacting online, communicating with others, managing everyday life, sustaining support networks, maintaining transnational ties, and expressing cultural identity" (p. 1).

In learning about a new environment, the immigrant looks for access to technology to inform their knowledge, monitor for patterns, and expand their knowledge of their new surroundings. Keeping informed involves staying in touch with local events and news related to their home countries. Transacting online encompasses using technology for practical matters and meaningful ways, such as applying for jobs or finding health information. However, Chesser et al., (2016) argued that immigrants, as one group among underserved populations, need skills to find and to critically evaluate health information online. These skills will lead immigrants to accomplish transactions based on "information needs firmly grounded in their present circumstances" (Diaz Andrade & Doolin, 2019, p. 14). Also, communicating with others includes the use of ICTs for interaction with service providers and government agencies whose means of dissipating information is increasingly online (Taylor et al., 2014). E-government services have changed the way government provide information, services and resources to people (Snead, 2014). Diaz Andrade and Doolin state that managing everyday life helps refugees with transitioning in a new country such as looking for an address or using basic mobile phone applications to organize their life. Sustaining support networks aid newcomers in maintaining social links with fellow country people both in their new environment and in their home countries. In maintaining transnational ties, the authors argued that "ICT□ mediated communication also offers opportunities for more expressive practices that contribute to the maintenance of emotional connections with friends and family separated by time and geography (Diaz Andrade & Doolin, 2019, p. 18). Finally, expressing cultural identity is about using technology not only as a vehicle for consumption and production based on entertainment and religion, but more generally as a way to connect to the place left behind.

Older immigrants tend to be less technologically savvy (Khvorostianov et al., 2012). Because they spent a large part of their lives in a different context, it is natural that they want to maintain contact with their homeland. Increasingly they have to use cell phone features such as video chats, texts, apps (WhatsApp, Facebook, etc.), to keep in touch with family members back in their home country, as well as a way to send money, and the technology skills required can be challenging (Atiso et al., 2018). Collins et al., (2016) argued that:

> Individuals with low-incomes who have family members living abroad have information needs and are faced with financial burden and complicated choices for communication with their family members living abroad. There is a need for interactive and convenient educational tools that build knowledge and skills that can be immediately utilized to save money, such as how to initiate and use Internet-based technologies in order to provide emotional support. (p. 7)

In addition, Collins et al. (2016), states "the digital divide with financial burden represents social barriers to the emotional support for the underserved population" (p. 9). This might explain the popularity of promoting free technology classes as effective tools in library outreach to low-income immigrant communities. Those classes are believed to help reduce the gaps in technology skills and also establish goodwill for public libraries. An example of such program is *The American Place* (TAP), an initiative of the Hartford Public Library in Connecticut. They were successful in giving participating patrons instructions on using the Internet and offering technology courses (including English as a Second Language courses). These resources allow the immigrants to develop language skills, find a job, and independently search for immigration materials online (Naficy, 2009). Such comprehensive programs should be supported by stakeholders in the government, considering that critical information is

increasingly being offered online. This information includes the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) electronic immigration system (also called USCIS ELIS). A lack of effort from the government may lead to even more significant barriers, as immigrants have low English proficiency skills and are less technology-savvy than the rest of the U.S. population.

Audunson et al. (2011) concluded that immigrants who use libraries find a broad range of literacy programs to help them keep in touch with their culture of origins, exchange ideas with others, and connect with the majority. Their qualitative design was based around in-depth interviews with nine Afghani, Iranian, and Kurdish immigrant women in Sweden. In their findings, the authors agreed that the library positively affects the lives of immigrant women, prompts them toward more active participation, and thus provides net benefits to immigrants. The attitudes of the immigrant women toward public libraries as a place to foster literacy were similar to those in the United States. The authors saw public libraries as legitimate communities that opened doors for immigrants to engage other communities and provided access to resources that would not have otherwise been available to them. This increases the role of libraries as institutions providing social capital—defined by Putman (1995) as "networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit" (p. 67). According to Ferguson, (2012), to build social capital, public libraries need to be more accessible and understand those groups "own stock of cultural and social capital" (Ferguson, 2012, p. 31).

2.5 Issues for Public Libraries

2.5.1 Challenges for Public Libraries

I indicated earlier the role protective behavior plays in individuals' information experience. Those protective behaviors are ever present in the way immigrants experience with

this institution that is the American public library. Because of immigrants' library experience in their home country are likely to have been different than their experience in the United States, they face the choice to seek help and bridge the gap (Dali, 2004). When immigrants decide to seek help to make sense of the situation, public library staff who have understanding of concepts in Dervin's Sense-Making theory can be more successful in meeting their information needs.

For Chatman's (2000) life in the round for members of these groups, has "accepted levels of uncertainty" (p. 9) even though it is a life full of its imprecision, it "is close enough in order to survive" and "provide some measure of security" (p. 9). Living within the parameters of a life in the round might help explain the disengagement of an individual immigrant who has never or seldom used public libraries, notably in the way they perceive such institutions. In addition to shared values and symbols, immigrant communities are influenced by shared sociocultural and economic realities that can act as roadblocks for library staff members in their attempts to understand and better serve different immigrant populations. Chatman's normative behavior theory can also be used to understand members of a community and their views of public library from a position of otherness, and how that may limit library staff access to that community. According to such a framework, public library staff members are seen as outsiders whose attempts at engagement might be seen as suspicious.

This suspicion might lead immigrants to not engage with public libraries. The fact that information is readily available at libraries does not mean that poor immigrants will engage with public libraries. For example, Jaeger and Thompson (2004) used the worldview component of the theory of normative behavior to explain why marginalized communities have not extensively used electronic government information services sometimes referred to as e-government service. The researchers believe that electronic government information has no meaningful value and "is

not worth the effort" (p. 104). In attempting to make local governments more democratic and more inclusive in the lives of people, many elected leaders do not take into consideration the concerns (e.g., globalization, privacy, and functionality) of those communities. For some immigrant communities, e-government might be synonymous with surveillance; the unwanted attention it provides might lead legal immigrants to shun those service as they themselves interact daily with close friends and families with undocumented status (Guberek et al., 2018). These groups' information poverty and normative behaviors help explain the reasons these communities turn to their own norms in their information-seeking behavior.

Immigrants who grew up in countries where publicly funded institutions do not provide adequate services might come to expect the same from their countries of adoption (Caidi & Allard, 2005). Ashton and Milam (2008) argued that "participation in public and civic life is not a traditional expectation for many immigrants. For documented immigrants, which this paper is focused on, even the simple American act of registering for a library card can be a strange and frightening experience for some" (p. 5). American public libraries' emphasis on serving immigrants as an essential part of their offerings might not always resonate or even be understood.

According to Sonn (2002), immigrants "may adapt social and support systems based on the home culture to the new culture" (p.205). By looking to their own form of access, they may be left out of electronic services. By embracing e-government services in their attempt to provide access, public libraries may face roadblocks if they do not take into consideration the information practices of some communities. People will not look for day-to-day information at institutions such as libraries if they perceive that there is no need to do so. Individuals will not

cross the information boundary if the perception is that such information is not critical or not relevant, and thus, the life lived in the round is maintained (Chatman, 1999).

Public libraries provide immigrants with a range of collection assistance and programming services to improve their job searching skills and learning English as a second language, yet it is clear that not all immigrants users have benefited (Brown & Lopez, 2015; Gorham, et al., 2013). Burke's (2008) study provides an overview of which immigrants communities were likely to use which specific types of services. For example, immigrants from Latin American countries and the Caribbean use the public library for school as opposed to Asian immigrants who use the library "to borrow materials and to use the library for enjoyment or hobbies (p. 39)." Facing cultural, social, language, and economical barriers, they tend to seek information internally to their own ethnic group—thus increasing their isolation from mainstream society and decreasing their access to information. For example, Camarota (2012) point to the fact that "23 percent of immigrants and their U.S.-born children (under 18) lived in poverty, compared to 13.5 percent of natives and their children" (p. 2). In addition, Camarota's research found that "immigration has increased the low income population in the US. Thirty-six percent of immigrant-headed households used at least one major welfare program (primarily food assistance and Medicaid) compared to 23 percent of native households" (p. 2). Public libraries face a daunting task in overcoming those barriers, as membership in those small groups pushes immigrants toward group conformity, whereas the public library's impetus is toward openness. However, providing those collections and services dedicated to immigrants is one aspect of the information need equation. Having staffing that fosters an inviting and inclusive environment to those immigrants is also worth investigation.

While a vast bureaucracy might create an institutional barrier that slows down and restricts the communication of vital information, Savolainen (2016) argues that the institutional barrier "comes into existence when organizations such as government offices and libraries consciously prevent the individual from obtaining the information that is needed" (p. 55). As a result of institutional barriers, the individual will fail to access the information source which will lead to a slowdown in the information-seeking process. The lack of resources, bureaucratic inertia, poor staff training, and material availability, are some of the factors accompanying such limitations. When outreach to immigrant populations is looked upon as "extra service" and libraries gives the immigrants the impression that these services are not required, it produced structural limitations which often makes library engagement far worse, as it becomes harder to regain the trust of disappointed immigrant users (Cuban, 2007, p. 64). So it's important that institutional barriers are overcome so that immigrants get a good first impression that will encourage them to come back (Koerber, 2018).

Savolainen (2016) also acknowledges organizational barriers created by bureaucratic inefficiency, the lack of trust, and internal competition between teams, which might result in obstacles to information sharing. Organizations' internal conflicts and discord among organizations creates obstacles to users and potential users. These organizational barriers impact library outreach toward immigrant communities in two ways. First, teams of librarians and library staff focusing on outreach efforts are becoming the norms in more public library organizations. As they compete for limited resources in the library this might generate unintended barriers to organizational information sharing between teams, producing inconsistency in outreach efforts. Outreach is "reaching out to non-traditional library users, extending beyond borders of a physical library and promoting under-utilized or

new library resources" (Dennis, 2012, p. 369). Second, as public libraries are seldom the only active institutions in working class immigrant communities, a mindset toward the "not-invented-here syndrome" (Savolainen, 2016, p. 56) between publicly funded institutions and other not-for-profit organizations working in these communities might be counterproductive and damaging to effective community engagement. In this respect, immigrants are entangled between those entities by providing conflicting information (Ruokolainen & Widén, 2020).

In their groundbreaking study, Fisher et al. (2004b) investigated migrant Hispanic farm workers' information-seeking behavior and their displayed patterns of behavior which showed the role of personal contacts. In addition to their low socioeconomic status in the economically distressed area of Yakima Valley, these farm workers lacked the understanding of the culture to navigate their new environments and thus used their own social contacts to survive. Their limited English language skills were a significant factor as well. Many of the participants in the study relied on personal contacts who had lived in the United States longer than they had as the newcomers' primary source of information. The researchers investigated two community technology centers (CTCs) that were established to educate migrant workers. The authors concluded that the CTCs were successful in providing free access to computers, classes, and computer instruction to those populations. Their limited information literacy was enhanced through individual networks and, in many cases, services in a language other than English.

2.5.2 Opportunities for Public Libraries

Libraries are known as the great equalizer, and at the public library everyone is welcome. Public libraries have provided opportunities to millions of people in the United States, and by tapping into individuals' needs for information, library services have helped

communities across the country, including immigrant communities (Wang, 2012). According to Jaeger et al., (2014), “in many communities, the public library is the most important institution available to immigrants in adapting to their new lives and new communities, while also helping to preserve identities, and connections to original cultures" (p. 32). The public library provides a forum for people from different cultures to meet. Immigrants use of public libraries have been uneven (Burke, 2008). For example, according to Holt & Holt (2010), immigrant newcomers with limited literacy and English literacy skills are not able to take full advantage of the services the public libraries offer to better their lives (p. 23). However, those that do come report enjoyment of the library and are grateful for the services received (Ulvik, 2010). It is unfortunate as there is a correlation between literacy skills and employability. Sum and al., (2004) stated that” the labor force behavior of immigrants in the U.S. was strongly associated with their literacy performance. Immigrants with stronger composite proficiencies were much more likely to be active participants in the labor force and less likely to be unemployed when they did seek work” (Sum et al., 2004, p. 50).

The way immigrant groups adapt in the U.S. is each unique because different immigrant groups have different information needs (Wang et al., 2020). Within- and between-immigrant groups, the attitudes toward social adaptation to their new land varies (Mesoudi, 2019). This variation is due to the diversity of immigrant communities in the US. Although the country was multiethnic and multicultural from the beginning, the complex ethnic and racial landscape became more pronounced beginning in the nineteenth century, and exponentially increased after the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965 (Perez & Hirschman, 2009). According to Abramitzky and Boustan (2017), the restricted immigration policies in the late nineteen century favored European immigrants while specifically restricting Chinese

Immigrants. By 1920, while 45 percent of immigrants came from traditional European countries, 41 percent came from these the new regions (Abramitzky & Boustan, 2017). According to Kritz, and Gurak, (2015), the selectivity in immigration policies that followed the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965, led to waves of immigration in the U.S. that is more racially, socio-economically and culturally diverse.

Hall and Farkas (2008), argue "since the 1960s, there has been an increase in the educational gap between U.S. immigrants and natives. This shift in skill composition has led to the concentration of immigrants in low-skill jobs and occupations" (p. 619). Although these immigrants are paid 24% less than natives, they have a higher regard for these low paying jobs (Hall & Farkas, 2008). According to the Pew Research Center (2019), almost 30% of immigrants lack a high school diploma. Srinivasan and Pyati (2007) argue that immigrants tend to belong to various social segmentations depending on their educational and professional levels, their skill levels, their English language skills and how they came to the United States. Depending on the time of arrival in the US, immigrants with the same nationality may have different information behaviors and needs, and their perception of libraries may be different depending on their social and the economic situations (Burke, 2008). These issues mean that public libraries face a variety of challenges in the way they approach services to immigrant communities. According to Pilerot (2018), library staff have two main attitudes toward immigrants. In the first case, library staff see it as their duty to help those patrons as long as it is according to the service guidelines of their institution. They look at "what the library should do for newly arrived immigrants (and other user groups)" (Pilerot, 2018, para. 12). The second type of staff approach is based on their understanding that these customers are "unaccustomed to public library activities and services and therefore tend to express new needs and demands and look at their role" (Pilerot, 2018, para.

12). The tenets of those is this camp is "what the library can do for newly arrived immigrants" (Pilerot, 2018, para. 12).

A report by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) (2010), highlights specific avenues that public libraries can focus on to address the information needs of immigrant communities. Some of the recommendations were:

> Partnerships. Libraries should seek input of immigrants and their community representatives. They can serve on library boards, library working groups.
>
> Collections. Libraries should take unto accounts the need of immigrant communities in collection development, consults with other agencies that serve immigrants, and conduct immigrants assessment need.
>
> Information services. Library websites should list resources for immigrants. Library staff should provide referrals for local resources and create community guides.
>
> Programs and Events. Libraries should focus on intergenerational programs, and "bridge" programs for better integration to the local immigrant community.
>
> Outreach. Libraries should have staff that is familiar with outreach messages. Libraries should know their target audience, and where those immigrants live and work. Recruiting members of those communities on library boards, provide library tours, create fliers in different languages, and reach out to local public radio.

> Planning. Libraries services to immigrant population should be developed in unison with them; the mission statement, scope of service, budget, organizational structure, and library staffing should reflect immigrants' services need. (USCIS, 2010)

The American Library Association (ALA) has been at the forefront in guiding public libraries in servicing immigrants including non-English speaking newcomers (Pokorny, 2003). ALA's mission statement is to "ensure access to information for all" (American Library Association, 2019). Some of the Key Action Areas include in diversity "the promotion and development of library collections and services for all people," in Equitable Access to Information and Library Services "serving people of every age, income level, location, ethnicity, or physical ability, and providing the full range of information resources needed to live, learn, govern, and work"; and in Literacy "children and adults develop the skills they need-the ability to read and use computers-understanding that the ability to seek and effectively utilize information resources." (American Library Association). Among the findings in the report, *Serving Non-English Speakers: 2007 Analysis of Library Demographics, Services, and Programs*, it was noted that "Spanish is, by far, the most supported non-English language in public libraries", followed by Asian languages, and Indo European languages (Koontz & Jue, 2008, p. 1). The report also found that smaller communities serve more non-English speakers and that literacy is "a barrier for non-English speakers" (Koontz & Jue, 2008, p. 1). Moreover, a resolution adopted by ALA Council during their Midwinter 2007 meeting, stated that immigrants have a right to access to information. As such, they become an integral part of public library services. The resolution is enshrined in ALA Policy Manual which guides public libraries policies in regard to immigrant services (ALA Council, 2013).

A white paper produced by ALA's Public Program Office and New Knowledge Organization, a social science organization think tank, in 2019, *The New Americans Library Project,* gathered information regarding public programs in and outside of the U.S. with the collaboration of library and partner organizations staff (American Library Association, 2019). The findings of the six-month project culminated in nine recommendations based on six public libraries in five cities representing rural, suburban, and urban areas "with diverse immigrant populations, cultures, and languages" (Flinner et al., 2019, p. 4). Among the findings, the project confirmed that libraries offer a wide range of programs and services designed to address the multiple need of immigrants. The report indicates that immigrants who take advantage of those opportunities and "turn to public libraries for support are a diverse group and developing programs that accommodate a variety of learning groups is imperative for libraries" (Flinner et al., 2019, p. 5). Among some of the important considerations of the reports were citizenship preparation, digital literacy, and access to programming. Also, the report found that some newcomers were very familiar with library services. On the other hand, some immigrants were not aware of the resources available to them. Finally, an engaged and multicultural staff helps alleviate some of the issues immigrants experience with library services. The authors stated that "some patrons did not have access to libraries in their home country, and libraries serve different roles in different places" (Flinner et al. p. 9). Among the recommendations and suggested actions, the writers argued that public libraries should do the following:

Assess community needs

Foster partnerships with community organizations

Offer professional development opportunities for staff and volunteers

Include new Americans in decision-making and implementation

Use terms that resonate with your specific community

Develop multilingual resources

Foster connections between new Americans and existing residents

Create more intergenerational programming

Build sustainable services (Flinner et al., 2019, p. 15-17).

2.6 Summary

This literature review presents a conceptual framework to study immigrant populations and library services. It explores specific theorists and theories that could better inform the strategies that public libraries could utilize to address barriers to the information needs and information-seeking behavior of immigrants groups. It is essential to study not only the characteristics of immigrants as they seek information as part of their information experience, but also the way disadvantaged communities go about finding information both mundane and unique (Wilson, 2000). Throughout the literature, there is a strong emphasis on immigrants' reliance on social networks (Courtright, 2005). I present a logical structure to connect concepts to approach the study (Osanloo & Grant, 2016). Because immigrants as a group are heterogeneous, no one theory alone can explain their information-seeking behaviors. The information barriers facing immigrants are interrelated, as they can face one or multiple barriers. Chatman's theories of information poverty, life in the round, and normative behavior, and Savolainen's work on everyday life information-seeking behaviors represent some of the most pertinent frameworks to understanding immigrants' information behaviors. These may be

the best theories to inform strategies that public libraries could implement in engaging with such communities. The sociocultural barriers, such as language issues, small worlds, technological challenges, organizational roadblocks, and institutional obstacles, prevent engagement by immigrants toward public libraries. Sirikul and Dorner (2016) specified this by stating that "the issue of immigrants needing to overcome barriers to accessing information is directly related to the mission and performance of public libraries" (p. 536).

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology that I employed for this study. First, the research design that I used to answer the research question is explained and justified. The next sections outline the choice and rationale for the research site and participants, and the final section reviews the data collection and data analysis plans.

3.2 Research Design

As stated in Chapter 1, the focus of this dissertation is on understanding the information experience of a marginalized group of people, specifically immigrants who are underemployed (and potentially limited skills), have limited income, and limited English who may not engage public library services for their information needs. Creswell (1998) advised researchers to provide due diligence in planning and understanding their research design and the problem raised in their study. In a research design, there are many considerations and moving parts, and the researcher's role is "to connect (and reconnect) the dots between all of these intersecting parts" (Ravitch & Carl, 2015, p.67). Such a design is best understood as a roadmap to conduct research, or a building structure (Levy, 2017). Some are more flexible than others, but the key is a clearly logical and sound research process to analyze and collect data. A research design starts with a strategy to address the problems and answer the questions. An example of such a strategy is Maxwell's (2013) five key components, which he calls "interactive" or "systemic," and includes Goals, Conceptual Frameworks, Research Questions, Research Methods, and Validity. These concepts are interrelated and form integral parts in a research design, and each is

responsive to the other components as opposed to being cyclic or linear (Bazeley, 2013). Therefore, a research design allows a sense of control or direction over the study.

To answer the research questions proposed in Chapter 1, an exploratory qualitative case study design was chosen. An exploratory research study is a design that answers one or more questions when limited information is known about the topic (Sim & Wright, 2000). For Leavy (2017), the exploratory research provides new information and "fill[s] a gap in our knowledge about a new or under-researched topic, or approach [es] the topic from a different perspective to generate new and emerging insights" (p. 5). As shown in the previous chapter, the literature relevant to research on non-library user immigrants is limited. This type of study allowed me to uncover some of the meanings of the phenomenon being studied. McNabb agrees that this type of research examines the issue in a new way, but also can serve as a tool to gather information and take an in-depth look to address "an administrative problem" (McNabb, 2015, p. 96). Tripathy & Tripathy (2017) argue that the nature of the research problem determines if the study is exploratory, descriptive, or casual. However, Creswell and Creswell (2018) believe that "qualitative research is exploratory and that researchers use it to probe a topic when the variables and theory base are unknown" (p. 104). The aim of exploratory research is to understand a phenomenon. In contrast, for example, descriptive research is one whose aim is "to document the nature of a phenomenon through the systematic collection of data" (Carter, & Lubinsky, 2015, p. 140).

This case study is concerned with the New York City immigrants living in the US for the first 10 years navigating the information landscape of the public library. The case study is not representative of the information experience of English Speaking immigrants, immigrants from very industrialized nations, and those who have been in the country longer than 10 years.

Immigrants were selected for this study based on the criteria that they have limited income, that they have limited job skills, that they come from a non-English speaking country and demonstrate limited spoken English language skills. They were selected regardless of whether they have visited a public library in the US or not. This research project followed a constructivist approach to answer the research questions. Maxwell (2008) believes people have a view in which they see the world that, consciously or not, influence how they go about doing research. I am aware of my assumptions and values. However, this did not provide me with a license to replace scientific rigor. The assumption of this emerging study was conducted in a context-dependent inquiry, and the analysis of the data was done inductively. (Creswell, and Poth, p. 228). A qualitative analysis was used for this study to determine the information experiences of immigrants, their perception and experience of public library services, and the way the public library can better assist them. For Flick (2014), qualitative research is ideal for "exploring and understanding this life world and the individual (and social) biographical processes that have led to the current situation of our participants." (p. 12). In qualitative research, researchers focus on how individuals make sense of their different realities and include individual experiences, behaviors, perceptions instead of statistical procedures" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 11).

Citing an example of participants taking part in a research on hepatitis, Flick (2014), argued that in such a case, qualitative research might help a researcher understand why those participants would "make use of social and health services or refrain from using these services" (Flick, 2014, 13). Also, their "personal experiences with the health system, the meanings they link to such experiences, and the discourses and practices concerning these issues in their contexts" (Flick, 2014, 13). In the same vein, this study investigates the underlying elements behind immigrants seeking the information as part of their information experience, and the role

public libraries might play in their desire to find information, thus is best served with a qualitative approach.

A case study was designed to address the proposed research questions. According to Sandelowski (1996), "the epistemological thrust of qualitative research is case oriented" (p. 525). A case study is a descriptive research approach that allowed for the investigation of "an individual, an institution, or a phenomenon in a unique setting in an intense and as detailed a manner as possible" (Lawal, 2009, p. 78). In descriptive research, the purpose is to accurately and systematically describe "an individual, group, or community" (Dulock, 1993, p. 154). The empirical nature of a case study is appropriate to study the "what" in the proposed research question and was helped to describe and explore the phenomena in the main research question (Alpi, & Evans, 2019). According to Yin (2017), the "how" and "why" (as in these above research questions) "are likely to favor using a case study" (p. 11). A case study is appropriate to investigate immigrants' perceptions, experience, and the role public libraries might play in their information experience.

Accordingly, a case study is chosen for this very reason because it is one of the best ways to study in-depth the perspective of immigrant non-library users. Knowing that immigrant communities may have a different view for their non-use or underutilization of libraries, this case study method was ideal for providing a multi-faceted exploration of complex issues of economically challenged immigrants in real-life settings. Because studying immigrants' non-library use is seldom undertaken in LIS, a case study for this research was valuable as it approached the phenomenon for its unique aspect of approaching the decision those individuals make to find information both mundane and critical that ended up affecting them in the short term and the long run.

Several investigations have employed case studies successfully to research immigrants' information experience with public libraries (Silvio, 2006; Shoham & Rabinovich, 2008; Vårheim, 2014; Johnston, 2016; Krueger, 2018; Mabi, 2020). Silvio (2006) used a case study to collect data from 24 immigrants' youths in several communities in London, Ontario, Canada with the use of semi-structured interviews, personal observation, and the examination of secondary data such as literature on Sudanese refugees. Vårheim's (2014) case study in a Norwegian city involved using unstructured interviews to collect data. He showed that library programming has a role to play for immigrants to contribute to the creation of social trust. Johnston (2016) used a case study consisting of 4 approaches: participant observation, interviews with participants, a focus group with program facilitators, and a questionnaire to show how conversation-based programming in libraries helped support the integration of newcomers. Krueger's (2018) case study investigates the role of conversation-based language cafés in creating a platform for communication for immigrants in public libraries in the Norwegian cities of Oslo, Moss, and Horten. Through participants observations and the use of questionnaires of 64 immigrants and 31 volunteers, the researcher found that the space the forums provided immigrants "shows great potential for supporting immigrants' political integration and bringing their voices into the public sphere by fostering linguistic competence, expanding social networks, promoting information exchange" (p. 10).

3.3 Research Setting

The data were collected in New York City. The City, as it is called, has a long record of providing services to its immigrant populations. As travel to America became more affordable, more people naturally followed through the same port of entries used by their predecessors and stayed (Anbinder, 2016). The massive immigrant waves resulting from the 1965 Immigration

Acts affected gateway cities such as New York more so than other regions in the U.S. (Donato et al., 2008). The booming city economy, specifically in the immigrant-dominated garment industries, the efficient intra-city transportation systems allowing communities to expand further, and the presence of already established immigrants' communities, businesses, and places of worship, meant that the new arrivals felt welcomed (Anbinder, 2016). City public services, including its public libraries, were creating services explicitly tailored to the needs of recent immigrants (Klinenberg, 2018). New York City's elected officials look for immigrant support to maintain their political power, and thus tend to have tolerant attitudes toward those groups. All of these have led to New York City becoming a magnet for immigrants from all over the world.

As a coastal and gateway city, New York City has historically large thriving communities of immigrants, which have impacted the city and have been impacted by it (Singer, 2004). Adding in the dynamic nature of the city population, and it maintained its status as America's largest city for many years (NYC Planning, 2019). New York City represents one of the most significant settings to study immigrants in an information context because of its proportion of immigrants compare to the overall population. According to the New York City Mayor's Office of Immigration Affairs (De Blasio & Mostofi, 2018), *State of Our Immigrant City Annual Report*:

> New York City is home to 3.1 million immigrants, the largest number in the City's history. Immigrants comprise nearly 38% of the city population and 45% of its workforce. The foreign-born population resides in all corners of the five boroughs. Certain neighborhoods, especially in Queens and Brooklyn and parts of the Bronx and Manhattan, have particularly high concentrations of immigrant residents. (p. 9).

According to the 2018 report from the American Community Survey (ACS) of the U.S. Census Bureau, the population is estimated to be 8,443,713 with Queens County leading with a Queens population is estimated to be 2,298,513, which is 27.22 percent of the total population. Queens has the highest proportion of immigrants compared to the rest of the city (as shown in Figure 1, New York City Mayor's Office of Immigration Affairs, 2018, all legal status included). It is also the most ethnically diverse county in the continental U.S. (Gamio, 2019).

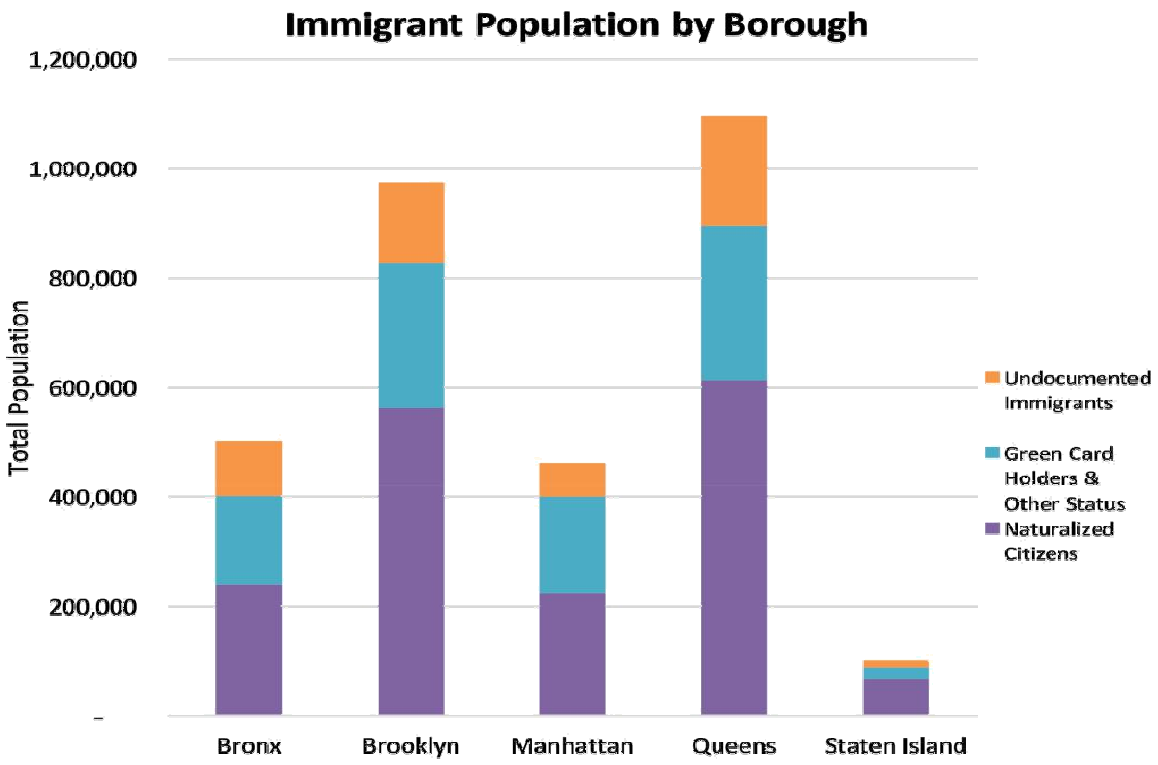

Figure 1 Immigrants population by New York City Borough

3.4 Data Collection Strategies

This research used use multiple data collection methods in order to find signs pointing to immigrants' perceptions and attitudes toward public libraries. While basic demographic data (such as age range, gender, cultural background, and years in the U.S.) were collected, the nature of this qualitative research was on understanding immigrants' experience. A quantitative approach might not be the best method to explain the motivation of those individuals. Quantitative methods emphasize objective measurements; the statistical, mathematical, or numerical analysis of data collected through polls, questionnaires, and surveys; or by manipulating pre-existing statistical data using computational techniques (Gilbert, 2006). Quantitative research, which often uses a positivist frame, emphasizes systematic investigation to discover meaning and phenomenon based on numerical data (O'Dwyer & Bernauer, 2013). The qualitative approach in this research, involves a mixture of data collection methods as shown in Figure 2. It is better suited to revealing a deeper understanding of the participants' situation. While qualitative methods such as action research, ethnographic research, and phenomenographic approach were considered, I deemed that the nature of the study I identified, and the types of research questions asked, would be more suitable for a case study approach (Yin, 2017).

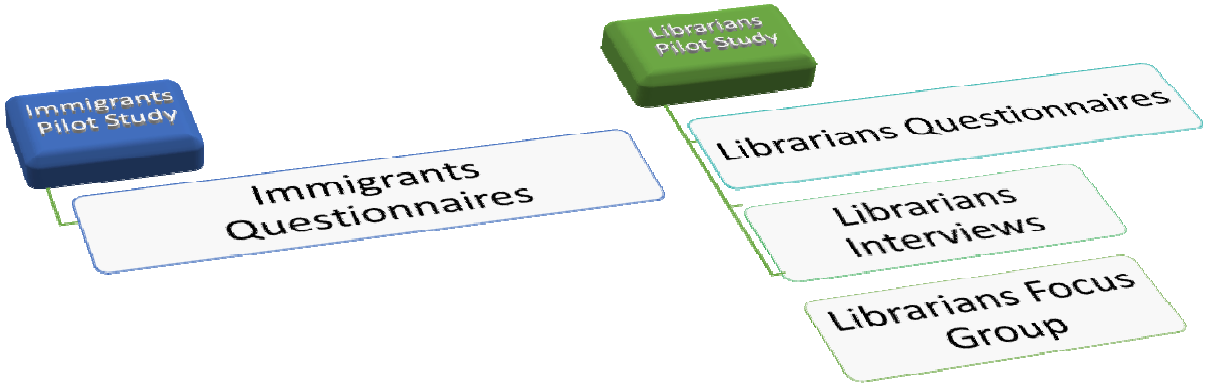

Figure 2 Data collection procedure

3.4.1 Pilot Studies

Yin (2017) argued that pilot studies help "to develop relevant lines of questions—possibly even providing some conceptual clarification for the research design" (p. 106). For Connaway and Radford (2016), the importance of a pilot studies lies in "whether the research design is realistic and doable'" (p. 62).

The pilot study can help conceptualize if a type of response fits the proposed research being investigated (Given, 2015). In addition, a pilot study assists to "provide information about relevant field questions and about the logistics of the field inquiry (Yin, 2017, p. 108). For example, I might first recruit a diverse group of immigrants fitting the characteristics of the population for a one-on-one interview but find that certain hours of the day or afternoon might not work for sit down interviews with immigrants who work as cab drivers. Although a smaller

number of participants took part, a pilot study is an effective way to assess the approach under study.

In this project, I conducted two pilot studies: one to test the questionnaires for the immigrant (pilot study 1), and one to test the questionnaires for the librarian (pilot study 2). I sent three participants from each group the questionnaire instrument to understand if any potential problems or issues might arise. Each of the participants was selected based on personal contacts. Their responses were recorded and transcribed for analysis. The data from these questionnaires were not part of the final analysis but used only to inform the data collection. One of the pilot participants expressed some minor suggestions and concerns: that the questions were not in languages other than English, and that some locations were open to distribute promotional fliers regarding the study. I made some minor changes such as slightly simplifying some of the wording in the final consent forms and explained the COVID- related limitations. During my outreach, I made a point to explain more clearly to any attentive and prospective participant the study in more detail.

3.4.2 Questionnaires

The first data collection method for this research called for the use of questionnaires. A questionnaire is used to collect data during a limited period of time. While in an interview, the interviewer asks and record the answers of the respondents, in a questionnaire, the participants themselves record the answers (Kumar, 2019). Although the questionnaire and surveys are used interchangeably, it is not the same. The survey is part of a plan and the method to collect data; the questionnaire is a tool to collect such data and can be a stand-alone instrument (Fowler, 2013). It has also been defined as a research design in which the researcher uses a tool such as a questionnaire to collect data (Baarda, 2010). For this dissertation, I am referring to

questionnaires — which could be done in person, online, or by telephone—have been used to assess both users and nonuser's library experience (Fernández-Ardèvol et al., 2018). Questionnaires are easy to administer and provide an increase in validity and reliability. They can be used as part of the primary research process and pre-assessment method to gather initial data, or as a follow-up tool in a study. Survey questionnaires are often used in quantitative methods to emphasize objective measurements; the statistical, mathematical, or numerical analysis of data collected (Gilbert, 2006). "Surveys design provides a quantitative description of trends, attitudes, and opinions of a population, or test for associations among variables of a population (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 17).

The strength of surveys also lies in its systematic approach, minimizing the researcher's subjectivity. The respondents may feel less pressure to fill out a form. As a means to multiple data collection method, surveys are useful in strengthening validity of research. This method provides a quick demographic characteristic of participants, such as age, gender, ethnicity, race, and educational background. Also, surveys can be used for specific open-ended questions, which help in finding out specific information (for example, how does a non-library user would feel about specific information barrier issues, in additions to whether they agree/disagree about their experience with the library's attempt to reach out to them).

Surveys are one of the best tools to understand the perspective of a group (Blakeslee, & Fleischer, 2019). It can be used as one of the many tools to understand information behavior of immigrant communities. An example of such studies is Atiso et al.'s (2018) use of a combination of data collection method such as interviews, surveys or focus groups to research the information need, challenges, and sources of immigrants from Ghana who live in Maryland, USA. Fifty

immigrants participated in the study. The findings show that the Ghanaian immigrant community, in general, does not view the library as a source of information, and faced barriers when they attempt to utilize those services. Those immigrants ended up relying on personal networks through social media for their information need. Participants who answer questionnaires might be seen as representatives of their particular communities just as in marketing and political research, respondents are looked upon on as archetype of a group of customers or voting block (Roulston, 2019).

To recap, in qualitative research, surveys are used to "provide complementary views of the phenomenon of interest" (Mills et al., 2005, p. 1106). Also, "qualitative surveys are an excellent tool to use if you're interested in understanding (or interrogating) people's experience or their practices" (Braun & al., 2017, p. 23). Since the 1980s, qualitative surveys have become increasingly popular because questionnaires as important instruments of surveys were regarded as too expensive, time consuming, and did not provide for a deep understanding of a problem (Pretty et al., 1995). On the other hand, a qualitative survey is different than a quantitative survey in its orientation as it seeks to describe whereas quantitative surveys are use on larger sample and use to compare categories (Braun et al., 2017). Also, in qualitative surveys, the questions on questionnaires are open-ended in order to capture the reasons and motivations behind a phenomenon. For example, Hassan's (2019) dissertation research on the health information needs and seeking and searching behavior of communities affected with vector-borne fly diseases in Nigeria used an open-ended questionnaire in order to uncover the information issues facing people in those communities.

Once the type of survey questionnaire is chosen, the researcher designs the instrument and constructs open-ended questions designed to minimize influencing the respondent's answers (Chiang et al., 2015). However, qualitative surveys in which individuals are to fill in information require reading and writing skills that they may not always have (Fowler, 2013). While questionnaires with open-ended questions are flexible, analyzing the data can be time consuming (Jones et al., 2013).They are prone to have a low returns rate and have an incomplete response rate. Also, the researcher is not necessarily there to examine the response sheets and verify that those filling out are qualified for the study.

In this research, the questionnaire for both immigrants and librarians took qualified users between 15 to 30 minutes to complete. The immigrant questionnaires were written in an accessible way to limited English immigrants using an easy to read, and simple basic level English. The questionnaires allowed participants to answer the questions with no bias that might have occurred had I been present. The questionnaires allowed me to reach more people than I would have with interviews. The pilot study (pilot study 2) was critical because it allowed me to understand the perspective of the public librarians. I used Microsoft forms to generate those questionnaires, but they were then uploaded to Qualtrics (https://www.qualtrics.com), a well-known survey platform in the US. Qualtrics provides a user-friendly interface that allows users to customize their surveys and work with other apps (Qualtrics, 2021). UWM has a subscription to the software, and it is made it available to faculty and students. Once my access was granted, the questions were uploaded, and I used the platform to generate survey links.

I sought to seek gatekeeper authorization beforehand, and I collected them for three weeks. Both types of questionnaires consisted of three parts. First, with the use of the questionnaire, information dealing with the participant's demographic characteristics were

collected, such as age, gender, ethnicity, race, and educational background as closed-ended questions. Second, the questionnaire closely followed the research questions and ask specific open-ended questions pertaining to their perception of the public library, their experience with public library services in their daily lives, the reasons for their non-use of public libraries, the engagements that the library needs to provide for them to participate. Third, the questionnaires included an open area to capture any other meaningful statements they think are important.

3.4.3 Interviews

The next strategy for data collection was to interview the public librarians. Interviews have been used by researchers in anthropology and social science for decades in order to gather information from their participants. For Brinkmann and Kvale (2018), "the research interview is an interview where knowledge is constructed in the inter-action between the interviewer and the interviewee" (p. 2). Research interviews are conversation tools used by researchers to learn about other people's experiences and their world. Interviews are a respectful way to gather data from marginalized communities and allow their voices to be heard (Cohen et al., 2013). For example, those authors argued that narrative, qualitative, in-depth interviews "allow participants to 'tell their stories' in their own words and recounts their subjective experiences and feelings" (Cohen et al., 2013, p. 435).

Interviews provide much more information than a focus group. According to Morgan (1996), "a 90-minute focus group discussion among 8 to 10 participants will, of necessity, generate roughly a tenth of the information that each participant would provide in an equivalently long individual interview" (p. 11). However, focus groups are important in this research, as they allow validation through multiple sources of data. As a method of data collection in library and information science, interviews are advantageous in making a thorough

assessment. For example, interview methods could explore and get a sense if those perceptions were based on prior experience with public institutions in their native countries, or a negative experience with a public institution in the United States. Interviews can be structured, semi-structured, or unstructured and use open-ended questions, closed-ended questions or a combination. This flexibility of format provides the investigator the freedom to decide the format, contents, wordings, and the order of the questions (Kumar, 2019). They can also be conducted face to face, over the phone, or online using audio and/or video. According to Cuban (2007), "phone interviews, especially in a new immigrant's first language, are convenient for those who cannot come to the library, and allow for small, practical pieces of information to be obtained" (p. 51).

On many occasions, researchers use interview methods to offer an assessment of the experiences of both user and nonuser immigrants; such multi-method studies reinforce their internal validity. Interviews are compelling because participants feel that they are part of a conversation. Data collected from interviewing people who might not use public libraries (such as groups of economically challenged, working immigrants) might be just as beneficial as the data from participants whose everyday life information practice includes habitual library use. The data collection method for structured interviews tends to follow the same patterns as questionnaires, in studies such as in grounded theory studies or phenomenology studies. "The techniques for constructing questionnaires and structured interview schedules are quite similar" (Connaway & Radford, 2016, p. 241).

As stated before, this research uses an exploratory qualitative case study to answer the research questions. The unit of analysis was the individual immigrant and public librarian.

According to Creswell (2013), “case study research is a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a real-life issue, contemporary bounded system” (p.97). As such, the interview of participants in the study provides a venue for participants who, because of the delicate or complex issues being addressed, might not be willing to speak in a group setting.

Because of the diversity of immigrant communities, it may be assumed that their views of public libraries are also diverse. Immigrants who might not have engaged public libraries might also have a variety of views. Making sense of such diverse views librarians have toward immigrants is possible through individual interviews in which their thoughts may reasonably be characterize as an example of such behavior.

Oduntan and Ruthven, (2017) used interviews as part of their data collection in studying situational information behavior in the context of refugee integration. They advocated for simpler informational processes when compared to the complex integration system that refugees and asylum seekers face in the UK. They recruited twelve asylum seekers and eight refugees to investigate the impact of the information behavior of those participants in a specific multidimensional environment. Twenty narrative semi-structured interviews were recorded. The examinations saw the need to utilize Dervin's sense-making methodology approach to inquire about information gaps in their semi-structured interviews. The authors sought to show the situational experiences of refugees and asylum seekers as they attempted to integrate into their new environments. Information need and behavior were influenced by the power of context, rooted in the process of incorporating these newcomers.

In another case, Adkins and Sandy's (2017) qualitative and exploratory study sought to investigate the information behavior of Latinos in the Midwestern United States, as related to

those immigrants' web-based technology use. The authors conducted interviews with 20 local Latinos, 15 other immigrants to the United States, and five native-born Americans of immigrant parents. The authors found that the information seeking practices of Mid-Western Latinos living in rural areas were similar to those of other immigrants living in urban areas. Those immigrants used social media, such as Facebook and WhatsApp, to stay connected with family members. However, those immigrants remained self-insulated and preferred personal connections as a means of finding information instead of obtaining information from the Internet or smartphones.

Since representation is an essential aspect in selecting interviewees, sampling becomes critical. In qualitative research, two main types of sampling exist: purposive sampling (the researcher selects the criteria for each participant), and convenience sampling (the researcher selects accessible participants). In the case of immigrants working long hours, purposeful sampling offers many advantages because the researcher determines their participants by selecting the users based on a specific set of criteria, such as individuals who are immigrants who might have never used public library services, and those who face socio-cultural barriers that limit their information use and information seeking behavior. As such, sampling strategies should look for commonalities in the experience of the immigrant users within those public libraries mandated service area — users in those libraries.

On the other hand, there are weaknesses in using interviews as a research method. Because there are numerous communities of immigrant patrons, each with their unique need, encapsulating the need of those customers broadly (even when they come from the same country) and generalizing the data can be very challenging. In addition, such research usually uses a small sample size in the research design, where I must be careful in generalizing their

findings and applying it to a whole set of the population—where it may not be representative of the perceptions and experiences of either those library users or nonusers.

The interviews took place online because of the COVID-19 pandemic and lasted up to 45 minutes. The interviews were audio recorded and I kept handwritten field notes on the encounter. All interviewees consented to be interviewed and recorded. The elements that used for the consent form for the semi-structured interviews included my information and contacts, the reasons for the study, the risks, the benefits, a statement of confidentiality and rights, and their signature. I began with some general and " 'icebreaker' questions, which allows the respondent to feel safe in answering" (Matthews, 2007, p. 51). As the interviewees became more comfortable, I moved to more open-ended questions based on their responses that could not be answered with a simple yes or no. They included opening, central, and closing questions. The interview protocols allowed for some flexibility based on their responses.

Although interviews provide rich data that likely would not come through in the questionnaire, the limitation of the interviews is that they took a lot of time to complete. Each session for the 10 librarian participants made the interview process a major undertaking. I scheduled each appointment, met with each participant, factored in transcription, conducted the data analysis, and stored the data.

3.4.4 Focus Groups

The third method of data collection was through a focus group. Once the librarian participants were recruited, I set up the focus group in order to reflect and achieve a broader understanding of the issues pertaining to services to immigrants who might or might not use library services. The role of the focus group is “to recruit and convene a small group of persons”

(Yin, 2017, p. 120). The moderator conducted a librarian group interview and attempt to elucidate participants' views. Those interview questions were guided and developed by the research questions. Researchers use focus groups as a method to collect data, as abundant data can be collected through a dynamic group discussion to understand the behavior, circumstances, and opinion of participants (Morgan, 1996). According to Lambert & Loiselle (2008), "group interactions may accentuate members' similarities and differences and give rich information about the range of perspectives and experiences" (p. 229). In a focus group, participant selection is often made randomly in order to get a representation of a population being studied. Another mode of selection is through purposive selection, which studies a specific group more in-depth. This approach is used to assess the effectiveness of library services in meeting the information need of working immigrants in marginalized communities. I recruited participants for the focus group from those who participated in the interviews.

The size of the focus groups varies, but it is recommended that it be between seven to twelve (Matthews, 2007). Many focus groups studying marginalized populations concentrate on the effects of library user services—in cases where research looks both at the tangible output (such as a resume/cover letter that helps a user find a job), and user benefits with libraries facilitating immigration workshops (such as with an attorney that processes green card papers or provides benefits to immigrant children with limited English skills) (Cuban, 2007; Matthews, 2007). Whitlatch (2011) examined what constitutes library services for marginalized individuals, studying both individual users' perceptions of library services, and nonusers views of the library outreach toward them (if any). She found that this is done more effectively through focus groups. Researchers using focus groups look at the perspective of the population to identify elusive, important elements in group similarities and differences (such as socioeconomic

factors, gender issues, and ethnicity in research issues) and in order to "to increase the depth of the inquiry and unveil aspects of the phenomenon assumed to be otherwise less accessible" (Lambert & Loiselle, 2008, p. 229). As such, more detailed information regarding people's attitudes toward libraries would be uncovered. Such a format provides insight into the ways in which opinions are formed and expressed.

The casual aspects of focus groups are beneficial to nonusers, whose voices in the library engagement debate might not necessarily be heard; this is useful to study their library's perceptions and attitudes regarding library accessibility. According to Jaeger et al. (2015), three models of access exist; physical (which deals with print and digital infrastructure that holds information), intellectual (which revolves around understandings and the ability to retrieve and use such information), and social (which pertains to barriers preventing inclusion). The authors point to focus groups as one of the modes to access hard to reach populations, providing a qualitative gauge of the perception of library services to users.

An example of research that uses focus groups is Ndumu's (2019) study of Black diasporic immigrants in the United States. The study looks at the possible relationship between the information overload of Black immigrants (a group that numbered between 3.8 million and 5.2 million) and acculturative stress. Two focus groups for a total of 10 black immigrants of different legal statuses and native spoken languages were selected. The researcher asked attendees questions about their pre- and post-migration information habits, examples of information overload, and their information challenges in their newly adopted country. The focus group's data revealed that the pre-immigration experiences and post-migration stressors of those

immigrants affect their emotions, feelings, or thoughts, which in turn impact how they perceive information and services.

Another research is Lloyd et al.'s (2013) study, in which a distinction between information seeking environments for refugees versus immigrants was made. In their study, they presented many similarities between the experience of refugees and immigrants, as well as their interaction with service providers in Australia. In this multi-phase study, the authors drew on a socio-cultural approach to study the refugees' information literacy model. In phase one, 10 migrant participants were interviewed (with the help of translators). In phase 2, there were 2 focus groups: one with refugees and the other one with members of service providers. Focus groups allowed the investigators to deeply study the themes and perspectives from phase one. Their findings suggested that the information literacy handicap, instead of being socioeconomic or technologically driven, came from socio-cultural factors. Their research concentrated on the encounter itself, and the gap between the service providers and the refugees. The refugees' information landscape in their new country produced an information disconnect. In turn, this information disconnect led to information poverty and self-isolation, as the refugees were unable to effectively process the volume of information given to them.

According to Creswell and Creswell (2017), "qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant's setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data. The final written report has a flexible structure." (p. 4). The strength of the data collection method lies in

looking at the views, opinions, and individual definitions which led to a phenomenon in their lives. By letting people express themselves, focus groups bring out complex views by allowing individuals to speak on their own behalf, instead of letting others speak for them. On the other hand, small group findings cannot necessarily be generalized to the broader populations being studied based on respondent responses (Thyer, 2009) Also, individual behavior can differ from group behavior, which leads Glitz (1997) to wonder, "do participants really say what they think or are they reacting to the more formal setting and saying what they think the organizers want them to say?" (p. 388).

Focus groups reinforce group dynamics and shared experiences. Research led by Sterling et al. (2018) conducted eight focus groups with English and Spanish speaking Home Care Workers (HCWs), including home health aides (HHA). It was strengthened by the fact that each home care worker came from a different agency. On the other hand, the participants of this union-sponsored study were union workers; this prevents the generalization of this study to nonunion home care workers.

The limitation of the focus group is that in all social situations, there are usually one or two people who tend to monopolize the discussions. It means that others who have important information to share might choose to withhold their thoughts or feeling because of cultural reasons or because it is the way they have been brought up. Also, some people do not feel comfortable sharing their ideas in public.

The one focus group for this study included five immigrant participants. The focus group was conducted virtually on WebEx. All participants informed me they were at the comfort of their home, and thus they were at a place the participant felt comfortable, with minimum

distraction. The focus group lasted one hour and was recorded. I kept handwritten field notes on the encounter which describe and capture the observational data, interactions, and anecdotal and any contextual elements (Montgomery & Bailey, 2007). At the beginning, each participant consented to this session, and were made aware of the recording and note taking, and the role of the focus group in the research project. The data gathered during the librarian focus group were analyzed qualitatively along with those of the librarian interview data and librarian open-ended questionnaire data.

3.5 Institutional Review Board Approval

I sought the approval of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee prior to conducting data collection. As an ethics committee, an IRB certifies that research is conducted according to the ethical guidelines established at the institutional and federal level. Ethical standards are important considerations that protect "the identity of the subjects and consent from possible participants must be obtained without deceit or manipulations" (Cargan, 2007, p. 26). It is a required process in virtually all disciplines that any researcher planning research and interacting with human subjects seek IRB approval (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2018). Participants were allowed to withdraw at any time during the course of the study, in which case their data would not be included. The respondents' anonymity and confidentiality were maintained.

When real names were known or used, they were be replaced with pseudonyms in the transcribed data. Respondent records were password protected at all times on my private laptop computer, and not accessible to anyone else. Digital records were securely stored right away

after the data have been transcribed. Audio recordings of the interviews and focus group session were destroyed after transcription.

Research involving vulnerable or hard to reach populations requires care and tactfulness. For example, participants may have included undocumented immigrants whose immigration status could have made them prone to deportation. I ensured that, in addition to the privacy guidelines, their responses did not include information that revealed the legality of their immigration status.

Being a long-time librarian, a researcher, and a [permanent resident OR naturalized citizen] who has lived in the U.S. for over xx years, I have to be aware that I might have been viewed in a different position within the social structure (Block et al., 2013). This awareness led to a research design that was respectful of the participants as human beings in light of the power dynamic between me and the participants, "especially when the participant may be undocumented or less educated" (Nguyen et al., 2013, p. 2). I paid attention to issues specific to immigrant populations that may come up during the research that requires special consideration. This included participants who do not have bank accounts, those whose cultural traditions prohibit accepting incentives and those who were fearful signing written consent forms because of past "negative interactions with authorities" (Clark-Kazak, 2017, p. 12).

3.6 Impact of COVID-19 on this research and in New York City

The outbreak of the coronavirus in March 2020 in New York City was devastating to economically challenged communities and created immense problems for hospitals by March of 2020. At the time, very few expected the lasting impact of the outbreak. When the disease started taking hold in the economically challenged neighborhoods in New York City, Mayor de Blasio,

and the New York State Governor, Gov. Andrew Cuomo took emergency action to address the burgeoning crisis. On March 7, 2020, Governor Como declared a state of emergency. On March 16, public schools and libraries were among the institutions closed in NYC based on the guidance of the CDC, and on the 17th they recommended that there be no gatherings of 50 plus people in the US. The outbreak in New York was devastating, according to the Johns Hopkins University of Medicine Coronavirus Resource Center (2021). By October 26, 2020, New York State had over 500,000 cumulative cases, and over 30,000 deaths, the most in the US. Although drastic actions were taken by New York officials to slow the pandemic, the impact was brutal. Three out of the five New York City counties (Brooklyn, Queens, Bronx), all with substantial immigrant populations, ranked among the top six counties for the number of deaths in the US.

The pandemic hit the immigrant communities particularly hard. Many lost their sources of income and/or their small businesses and could not afford to take care of their families. Some had no access to the many social programs upon which they relied. Many immigrants-centered industries lacked remote work opportunities and were closed. It was also a time where it was difficult to access reliable information. Already facing challenges before the pandemic, COVID-19 likely increased immigrant communities' challenging access issues to city government social programs, food insecurities, lack of health insurance, and economic and social barriers. The ethnic organizations and the immigrant-centered community-based organizations (CBOs) upon whom they had come to rely were offering in person services during this time as they were following the New York State guidelines on closures. Immigrants could not access reliable and vital information from people in their own culture and language, or organizations they knew. Organizations that had the capacity for remote work provided information over the phone or online to clientele who were able access their services.

The pandemic led to unique disruptions to information services at the New York City libraries. By mid-March 2020, all three New York City public library systems (NYPL, BPL, QPL) closed their doors to in-person service for the public in an effort to stop the spread of the new coronavirus. The library systems moved rapidly to a virtual format and were soon offering programs, chat references, ESOL and adult education classes, while buying more e-resources for their patrons. Eventually they would offer limited in-person services which entail "grab and go" services such as social distance check-out, online and over the phone book reservations, and patrons pick up and returns at selected locations. Library administrators faced difficulties but were flexible in their approach. Many public library staff were facing their own personal and professional challenges as a result of the pandemic. They were working partly at home and partly on-site, all while facing the handicap of providing information to hard-to-reach communities.

Along with other staff, when as a library manager on that Monday, March 16th, we were dismissed early for work, and we received instructions for working at home and instructions on how to connect virtually to a work computer until the coronavirus passed. I was working at home doing Online Reference remotely. In doing so, I needed a PC with Windows 7 or better and Internet access. The library loaned me a laptop and provided VPN access so that I could connect the library's virtual reference to provide such services. This next day after the official shutdown, public librarians at the Queens Central Library such as myself, were already at work curious to what might come next with this new situation. When it became obvious that it would be a while before any on-site services would return in New York City, we added more services such as online programs for the community. I, along with other staff, were reaching out to local presenters for virtual programs offered mostly through WebEx and Zoom.

Many members of the immigrant communities, lacking Internet access or phone service, could not access the public libraries. As we, librarians, communicated online, and over the phone, we shared our sense of despair because more than a quarter of New York City households lack access to broadband at home (Stringer, 2019). Just before the pandemic hit, we were gearing up at the library to expend services to households in the city lacking Internet access. The city government partnered with public libraries and other institutions to make a substantial effort to make every vote count and provide technology access to people for the 2020 Census, the first census people can largely take online. With the pandemic, this effort came to a screeching halt. Although virtually some efforts were made, we were concerned that the lack of Internet access at home limited those efforts.

3.7 Immigrant participants sampling strategy

As stated, the participants for this research included both immigrants and public librarians. Because of this diversity, recruiting diverse immigrant participants for this research in New York would facilitate maximum variation in the sampling strategy. The inclusion and exclusion strategies were the following: Immigrant participant recruitment was based on specific characteristics: they were at least 18 years of age, they were learning English, and they had lived in the US for less than 10 years. Participants who came from English Speaking immigrants and immigrants from very industrialized nations were excluded from the study.

I was looking for solutions to gather data that are both practical and effective. Data collection methods from online surveys provided a more direct solution to retrieve important information as opposed to interviews and focus groups for immigrants. Since in-person interviews and focus groups were out of the questions, it would not be possible to establish a

genuine rapport with those participants. In addition, these virtual interviews would most likely take place in participant homes. It might have led to technical issues as in the case of increased data cost to participants, time-lags, and disconnected calls (Krouwel, et al., 2019).

According to Moser and Korstjens (2018), "sampling is the process of selecting or searching for situations, context and/or participants who provide rich data of the phenomenon of interest" (p. 10). The goal of sampling was to obtain data which is truly representative of the population, but in the large urban centers being studied this is no easy task. For Arcury and Quandt (1999), that task was complex because of the size of those populations and the fact that "the space is too big to observe all of the relevant behavior. There are too many people for the investigator to interact with them all, so some justification for selection must be made" (p. 128-129). For the public librarians, the only requirement was that they have to work within the geographical boundaries of New York City metropolitan area.

My goal was to be practical in my data collection method. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), "writing of a qualitative text cannot be separated from the author, how it is received by readers, and how it impacts the participants and sites under study (p. 228). As a result, it is "no longer is it acceptable to be the omniscient, distanced qualitative writer" (Creswell, and Poth, p. 228). My own public service philosophies and assumptions align closely with those populations being studied. My objective was to give voice to their information needs, information seeking behavior, and perceptions of the immigrants' participants, as opposed viewing them through the lenses of my professional experiences and philosophies.

I sought both immigrants who access public libraries in New York City, and those who do not. Queens Public Library, along with the New York Public Library and the Brooklyn Public Library, make up New York City's three public library systems. When combined, they are the

largest public library entity in the US, with nearly 210 library locations and over 60 million items in their collections (De Blasio et al., 2019). Queens Public Library is an important resource for the diverse ethnic communities in Queens (Gitner & Rosenthal, 2008).

I used purposive sampling by selecting adult patrons based on three criteria: they possessed limited skills (such as digital, library, information literacy skills), limited income, and limited spoken English (the limited English participant was an individual that is conversant in English and is able to answer basic questions but whose native language is not English). Purposive sampling is a well-established method in qualitative research to identify and to select individuals from specific groups who have knowledge and experience regarding a specific phenomenon who are able and willing to participate (Palinkas et al., 2015). For Patton (2002), "purposeful sampling is one of the core distinguishing elements of qualitative inquiry." (p. 272). I opted to have the immigrant data collection in English only. Although using translators would be ideal, other studies that have included immigrants with limited skills have shown them able to share and express their ideas effectively (Squires et al., 2020). I attempted to have a broad representation. Although broad ethnicity, sexuality, gender, and economic status are ideal, samples in qualitative research are usually small due to the detailed data collection and analysis process.

Taking into account marginalized immigrants' perception of public libraries when factors such as sex, age, race, ethnicity, class, disability, and sexual orientation might play a role is a difficult task. For Allmark (2004), qualitative researchers are not able to ensure that so many types of representations in the samples of those populations because of the variety of those factors. During the data collection, I reflected on the broad nature of the immigrant population by working with immigrant groups who service a broad clientele in the City as opposed to a specific

type of immigrant group. I sought and partnered with places of worship, and community-based organizations who work with underemployed migrants working jobs such as home health aides, day laborer, taxi driver, and domestic workers. These institutions are known to provide assistance with housing, employment, healthcare, insurance, and community engagement. Because these immigrants struggle the most the first few years in a new country, I targeted those who have been in the United States for up to ten years. Although Caidi and Allard (2005) used five years as a starting point to divide the immigrant experience, where less than five years is considered newcomers, immigrants who have been is the US for up to 10 years might still not be established.

According to Flick (2014), "in case studies, sampling is purposive" (p. 123). The sampling strategy was to look for commonalities in the experience of those immigrants who might have never used a service at any library in New York City. I used different recruitment approaches including working with gatekeepers in the immigrant communities. These gatekeepers can be found at non-profit organizations, places of worship, ethnic media, and other institutions in Queens who cater to the needs of immigrants. According to Ellard-Gray et al. (2015), "it is a good idea to build rapport with potential participants before attempting to recruit. This process requires becoming immersed in the community, which was facilitated by meeting representatives of the population of interest. Community organizations who represent the population can help recruit participants who are hesitant due to mistrust of research" (p. 4). I already had familiarity with some of the opinion leaders in the community, which allowed greater access to those populations. I used the procedures identified by Arcury and Quandt (1999) to recruit participants and adapt it to this dissertation:

1. I determined the characteristics of immigrants that I intended to study. This study provides that the specific nature of such information is demographic, socio-cultural, and employment-related. Specifically, prospective participants were those who were authorized to work in the U.S. and can be described as having limited job skills, limited income, and coming from non-English speaking countries and/or having limited English-speaking skills.
2. I generated a list of sites frequented by immigrants that include one of the previously identified gatekeepers. In addition to my contacts, I had access to resources such as the latest *Queens Immigrant Task Force Directory of Services,* created by the Queens Borough President's Office of Immigrant and Intercultural Affairs, which coordinates immigrants services for Queens (and to a larger extent New York City) and include almost 100 service providers and government service agencies (Katz, 2018). This assisted in identifying additional sites.
3. I made a final determination of which sites to distribute fliers for the study based on criteria such as the diversity of communities served, the standing of such organizations in the community, and how receptive they are to this study. I broadened the number of locations but targeted many sites in Queens because of the diversity of the population who reside in some of those neighborhoods. There is no clear established rule for sample size, but in qualitative studies, they are generally small (Vasileiou et al., 2018).

The purposive sampling also included a snowball strategy as a second option. As a technique, snowball sampling offers "real benefits for studies which seek to access difficult-to-reach or hidden populations which are often obscured from the view of social researchers and

policymakers who are increasingly keen to obtain evidence of the experiences of some of the more marginal excluded groups" (Miller & Brewer, 2003, p. 275). I reached out to an initial set of participants based on my personal relationships. For Arcury and Quandt (1999), a researcher "meets with the gatekeeper, explains the study, and asks for help in recruiting study participants from the site's clientele" (p. 129). From that initial group, I asked those who agreed to participate, to reach out to their acquaintances who share the same immigrant profile and invite them to participate in the study. Because the goal was to recruit a broad number of participants, purposive sampling was not the first option. My aim was to recruit between 40 to 50 participants, both immigrants and librarians, across the three data collection methods until data saturation was achieved. Data saturation occurs when adding new participants in the research does not provide additional information to understand the phenomenon (Malterud et al., 2015).

3.8. Characteristics of immigrant participants

The participants in this research represented only immigrants who live and work in and around New York City. The immigrant survey initially called for 20 participants with a preference for 30. As I reviewed the responses as they came, I saw the need to gather as much data as possible and ended up with 30. I saw they were gradually providing new elements of information useful to the study. Since there would not be other forms of data collection from immigrants because of the limitation of the pandemic, it was necessary to gather as much data as possible from the survey.

I created shortened links using bit.ly (https://bitly.com/), a link management platform company that allowed both free and paid accounts to users. The shortened link was used in the

promotion of the research. Qualtrics has an option to distribute the survey through a QR code. I used a QR code in the fliers so, for example, on the way out of a store during their daily routine, a potential participant could scan on their phone as they walked by. Eighteen participants accessed the survey through the QR code and 12 used the anonymous link.

3.8.1 Immigrant participants gender, age, and number of years in the US

It is important to note that the immigrant participants were recruited during the pandemic which made it difficult to recruit people because they were fearful during the lockdown in New York City. According to Morse (2008), "in qualitative inquiry, the description of the context is often as important as the description of the participants" (p. 300). There is also the need to evaluate the pool of participants in order to have a sample that is representative of the typical demographic of the larger population. In the design of those studies, these demographic criteria are important elements, and they include elements such as age, gender, race, ethnicity, income level, or education.

Males represented 24.14%, and female 75.86% of the respondents, and one person did not answer the gender question. No one identified as non-binary. Many immigrants live in their ethnic communities where such identification is still taboo so it might be that such self-identification is still largely avoided even in an online survey. Twenty-five percent of participants were between 18-29, 46.43% participants were between 30-39, 17.86% participants between 40-49, and 10.71% were between 50-59 as shown in Figure 3. There were no participants who were 60 or older, and two participants did not indicate their age. Two immigrants stated they were in the US less than 2 years, 9 had been in the country between 1 year to 3 years, 9 participants between 4 years to 6 years, and 8 participants between 7 years and 10 years.

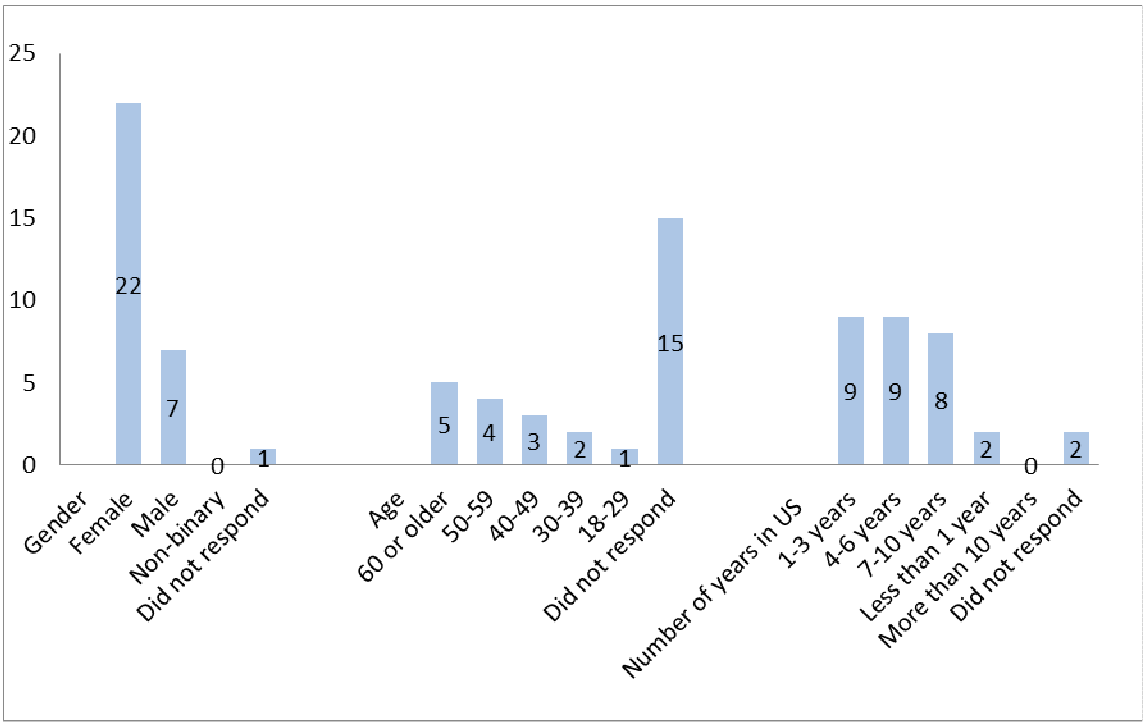

Figure 3 Gender, age, number of years in the US

3.8.2 Immigrant participants race, ethnicity, and country distribution

I made a concerted effort to reach densely populated immigrant hubs throughout Queens with a high concentration of immigrants. I found more success in areas with large Asian immigrant populations. The racial composition of the survey respondents were Asians (65.38%), followed by Blacks (19.23%), and people who self-identified as two or more races or others (11.54 %). The top four countries for participants were China (8), Mexico (3), Haiti (3), Columbia (2), and 1 for Malaysia, Brazil, Venezuela, Dominican Republic, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sudan, Paraguay, Cuba, Taiwan, and Ecuador. Three participants did not indicate a country of origin.

3.8.3 Immigrant participants income distribution, educational level, and English proficiency

We defined underemployment in chapter one as a state when a person accepts a “lower paying, lower status job than his or her education and experience qualifies him or her to perform” (Rothschild, 2017, p. 415). If we consider the combination of their college degree and income, it can be determined that these participants were underemployed. As shown in figure 4, of the 30 participants in this study, 25 reported an income of less than the median household income of $62,207 (NYC Comptroller, 2018). The median household income of the participant in New York City which is $58,856. Despite this, 50% of the participants had at least a bachelor’s degree and 39.29% spoke English at the intermediate level, whereas 36% of the population (age 25+) in the City had a bachelor's or higher (figure 4, and figure 5). It is quite possible that their education was completed elsewhere, and their educational credentials are not recognized, which might limit their opportunities. Also, 4 of the participants made over $50K, which by NYC living standard might not be considered "underemployed", unless the work doesn't allow the participants to take advantage of their knowledge and skills. No one reported speaking English below the basic level. This research design, the data collection method, and the circumstances of the pandemic led to the makeup of the sample population in the research. The selection of the participants was based on their eligibility, and their willingness to participate. It might seem counterintuitive to join a research study during a time when most NYC, the "city that never sleeps" was at a stand-still. Although the incentive provided helped, I believe that those that joined the research were genuinely willing to participate.

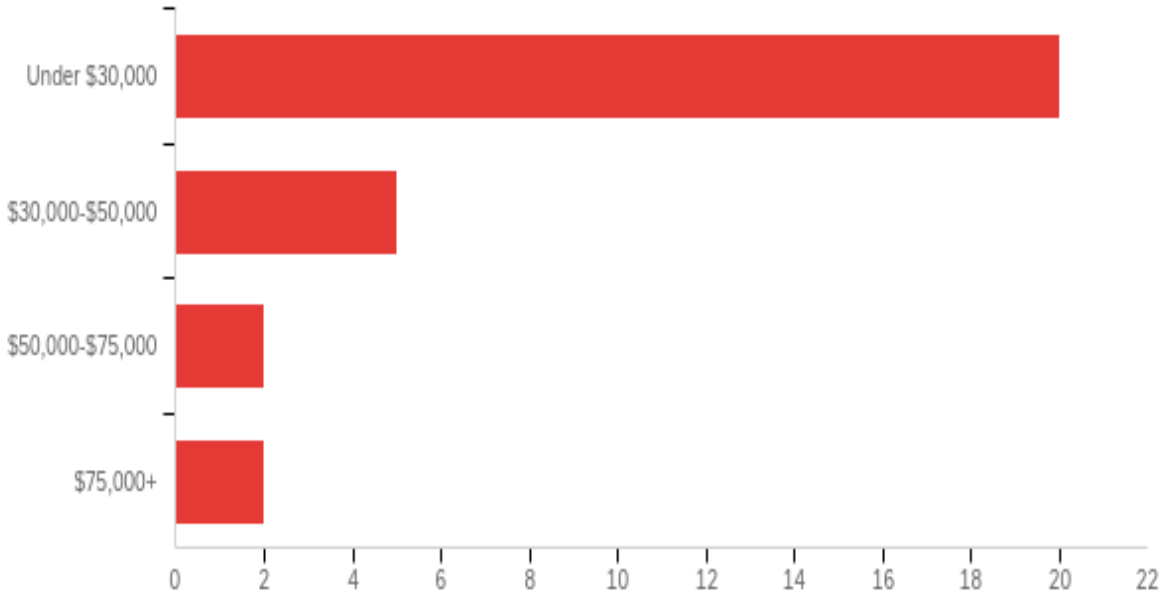

Figure 4 Income distribution

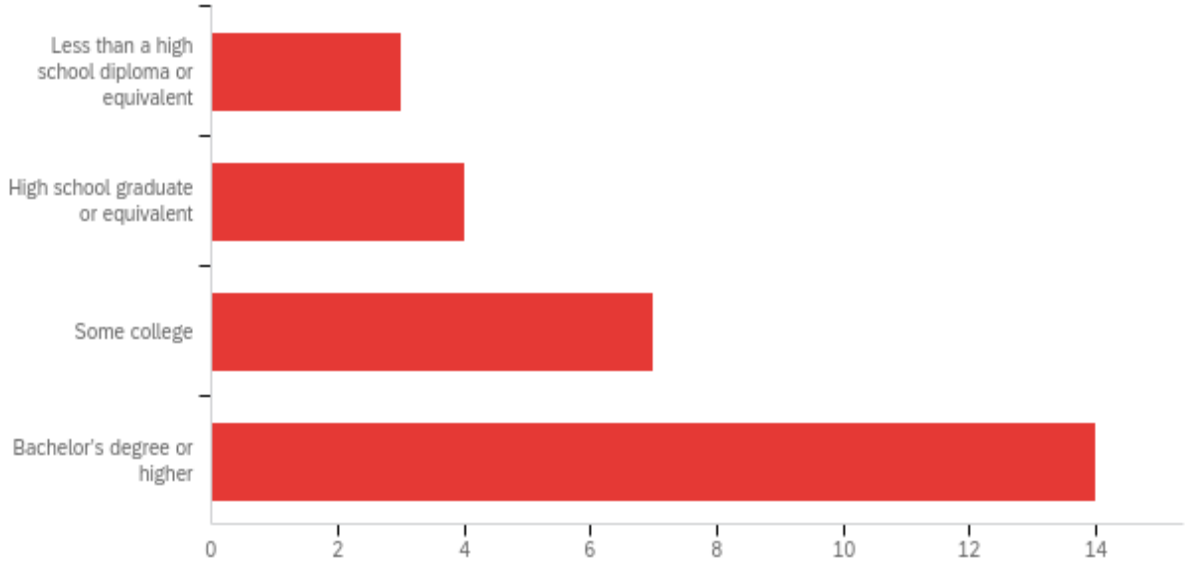

Figure 5 Education level

3.9 Inclusion and exclusion sampling strategies of librarian participants

I had great difficulty collecting data onsite in New York City, as originally planned due to the ongoing restrictions arising from the pandemic. This made it difficult to reach the audience of interest through the community venues that were essentially closed. The initial data collection effort had been very small with only a few participants. Instead of waiting for this pandemic to be over, a shift in strategy led to a focus of the data collection on public librarians who serve immigrants and were more accessible online during the pandemic instead of only concentrating all of the data collection onsite, and face to face on immigrants. Public librarians in the New York City area were encouraged to participate in the questionnaire, interview, and focus group data collection instruments to provide the library perspectives on meeting the needs of recent immigrants. Initially, I sought to recruit up to 25 librarians. In total, I ended up with 30 as I received new input until I believed I had reach data saturation. The inclusion and exclusion strategies were the following: (1) the participants had to be 18 years old, (2) the participants must be a public librarian working in the New York metropolitan area, (3) the participants provided direct services to immigrants' populations. Prospective librarian participants who work outside of the geographical New York City area, and not in a public facing capacity at a public library were excluded.

3.10 Characteristics of librarian participants

3.10.1 Librarian participants in questionnaires

The number of librarians who work directly with the public on the reference desks at the branch libraries in New York City three library system is not known, and it is not within this research study's scope. However, as figure 6 (From Neighborhood Data Portal at

https://prattcenter.net/resources/neighborhood_data_portal) shows, there is a local library branch that serves each of its 59 community districts. A community district is a local division represented by a community board that promotes local input, and community participation to the City Council and the NYC municipal government. Librarians, in this research, reflect the diversity of public libraries in the city, and they are in locations with high concentrations of immigrants.

Figure 6 NYC Non-U.S.-born population and libraries

The librarian participants added a rich layer to the research from the institutional point of view. The librarian survey was posted at the same time as the survey for immigrants. The questions were uploaded and collected using Qualtrics. Several librarians from other library systems in New York State, who did not qualify because of their location, reached out to me

during the data collection period and told me that they thought this study was very important and needed to be done.

3.10.2 Librarian participants in interviews and focus group

At the end of the librarian surveys, the participants were given the option to click on a link to fill out a contact form if they were interested in participating in an interview. The interviews generated interest mostly from the librarians working for the Queens Public library. I conducted 10 interviews which lasted between 20 minutes to 30 minutes. The interviews were conducted in CISCO WebEx (https://www.webex.com/) and Zoom (https:// https://zoom.us/). Seven librarians who filled out the contact form in the survey were interviewed; one who initially filled out the form did not respond, and three librarians who did not complete the survey participated in the interviews. The virtual focus group included librarians who filled out the survey. The focus group lasted 50 minutes.

3.10.3 Librarian participants gender, age, and race/ethnicity

Of the 22 librarians who participated in the survey 17 were female and 5 were male as shown in Figure 7. The field is known to be overwhelmingly White and according to the American Library Association's Diversity Counts, 88% of librarians are White (Davis & Hall, 2007). Whites represented most of the participants in this research. Of the 20 librarians who described their ethnicity, only 1 self-described as Hispanic or Latino. 33.33% of librarians taking the survey were between 50 to 59 years old, another 23.81% were 60 years and older which is consistent with the national average.

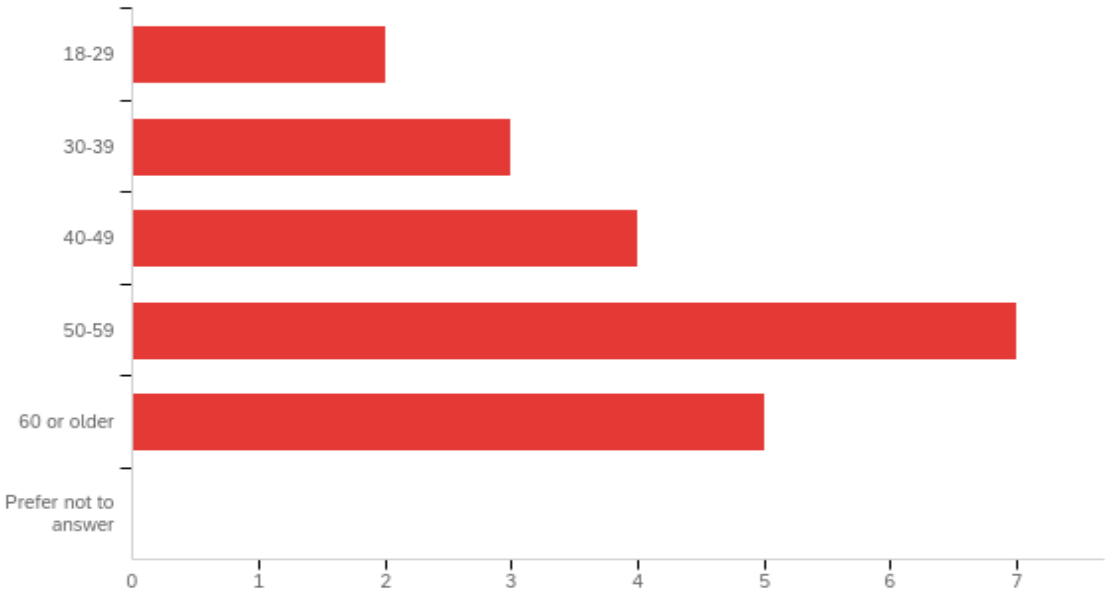

Figure 7 Age range of the librarians

3.11 Data Analysis Procedures

In their 1967 book, The *Discovery of Grounded Theory,* Glaser and Strauss developed the grounded theory approach in order to correct what they believed was a departure in qualitative research from the verification of a theory to the creation of a theory. Grounded theory is a method of systematically retrieving and examining data in order to formulate a theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). They believed that there was the need to systematically develop a technique to collect, code, and analyze data. Glaser and Strauss believed that through theoretical sampling and constant analysis, a sound theory can be generated to study a phenomenon of interest. Over time, they went their separate ways because of philosophical and methodological differences, and this led different schools of thought that continue to define this method.

Earlier, I argued that qualitative research is ideal for understanding the context that led to participants' views and actions. The data collected provided the context to understand the way in which immigrants make sense of their information behavior. In order to do so, I used some

elements found in grounded theory such as open coding to inductively use the data collected to find a "unified theoretical explanation" (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 107). To inductively collect data means to generate the participants '"words", "phrases", "sentences" and "narrations" in order to formulate a complete view of the group under study and provide a "'rich', 'full' and 'real' story" (Jebreen, 2012, p. 163). Consequently, I was able to explain through this process the perceptions of immigrants who might never have engaged with public libraries through the generation of a theory (Creswell and Poth (2018). For Miles and Huberman (1994), "qualitative sampling is often decidedly theory-driven either 'up front' or progressively, as in a grounded theory mode" (p. 14). It is one of the most widely used methods to analyzed data in qualitative studies and may be used in a combination of observations, interviews, and historical data analysis. According to Urquhart et al. (2010), there are four aspects of the grounded theory method (GTM). The first, the goal of grounded theory, is theory building; that is, while the researcher analyzed data, and delve into coding procedures, formulating a theory remains central to the research. Second, the researcher who undertakes this method does not have a preconceived theoretical notion that needs to be applied or tested in the research, so no theory is employed in the data analysis. Third, the researcher uses different stages of constant comparison in the research to compare all existing elements and notions in the research. Fourth, the researcher uses portions of the data (also called slices of data) to successfully refine the questions according to the emergent theory. Data is continuously analyzed and refined when new elements are found in the findings. Some of those four elements elucidated by Urquhart and her colleagues above were part of this grounded theory method (GTM). However, because of the nature of this research, the full scope of the grounded research was not necessary.

Along with different aspects of grounded theory, there are also various types of design considerations (Flick, 2014). In simple terms, grounded theory scholars argued about many issues such as the process of working with data, the position of the researcher when handling codes, the nature of the relationship between the researcher and research participants, and the influence of inductive, deductive, and abductive logic in the process (Apramian et al., 2017; Mills et al., 2006; Rieger, 2019). In grounded theory, the theory is constructed from the analysis of data, not discovered (Chun Tie et al., 2019). This means that the philosophical view (epistemological position) of the researcher impacts the approach used (Evans, 2013). Those considerations undoubtedly influenced which procedures for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

That being said, the number of grounded theories has been the subject of debate because these methods evolved as a result of the different philosophical assumptions that have contributed to the original method over time (Rieger, 2019). Although there are similarities among those theories, they are three distinct schools or strands among them: The classic Glaserian grounded theory (CGGT) (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), the Straussian grounded theory (SGT) (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), and the Charmazian grounded theory (CGT) also called constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006). The classic grounded theory sets itself apart from ethnography and traditional qualitative research. In lieu of starting out with and developing a hypothesis, grounded theorists begin with data collection and move toward their goal to formulate a formal theory based on patterns of behavior and that "transcend person, place, and time" (Apramian et al., 2017, p. 363). Classical grounded theory aimed to connect categories and concepts in order to explain and interpret data. Theories emerge through constant comparative analysis (Van Niekerk & Roode, 2009). Glaserian grounded theory was influenced by

pragmatism and had a positivistic viewed in that it implies one reality where the researcher remains neutral. Glaser rejects personal perspectives because it leads to bias and unavoidably contaminate data. Also, Glaser argued that the researcher should stay uninformed regarding phenomena (Glaser & Holton, 2004), For example, in the strict Glaserian method, the literature review is largely avoided to avoid undue influence on the research (Singh & Estefan, 2018).

Over time, Strauss modified his view of grounded theory and worked with Corbin toward a postpositivist perspective. Strauss and Corbin's stance is that it is difficult for the researcher to understand what is reality (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). For Straussian grounded theorists, personal bias can be controlled and minimized, but it is not always avoidable. The philosophical foundation of this theory is based on symbolic interactionism. The theoretical perspective of symbolic interactionism is the assumption that "people construct selves, society, and reality through interaction" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 344). In one way, Strauss and Corbin shared similar philosophical ideas with Glaser. For example, their approach to working with data is inductive. However, their analysis also takes into account deductive means for working with data. In addition, personal experience and literature reviews, although not used in the data analysis, can be "used to gain theoretical sensitivity" (Singh & Estefan, 2018, p. 4). Increasingly, Strauss and Corbin have moved away from relativist pragmatists toward a more constructivist view and a flexible approach to grounded theoretical processes that acknowledge "the existence of multiple complex realities that relate to real events, the varied participant responses to events, and the construction of theories by researchers (Rieger, 2019, p. 6).

To constructivist grounded theorists, the reality is constructed between the researcher and the participants that situate the "constructivist–interpretivist perspective to acknowledge researchers' active engagement in co-construction of knowledge alongside research participants"

(Singh & Estefan, 2018, p.3). To those who espoused this theory, the essential element is the way researchers recognize participants "authentic representations of the words, actions, and stories – the marginalized voices – of her participants" (Apramian et al., 2017, p. 365). In that respect, it moves away from positivist influences to embrace personal knowledge and experience, which aid knowledge (Charmaz, 2006). Charmaz argues for the examination of data through inductive means and (inference from data) and deductive means (checking data using theoretical sampling and more data).

Some elements of the Straussian grounded theory were found useful for analyzing data for the following reasons: First, SGT is increasingly regarded as a postmodern approach ideal for studying people's realities by using a social constructivist mindset to guide research. Second, it provides a solid but flexible set of guidelines that may help produce a theory useful for public libraries. Third, SGT has a more nuanced approach that recognized some of the tenets of classical grounded theory while taking into account the role of the researcher in the contextual factor of the phenomenon being researched.

SGT provides some guidance on the steps to be taken to collect and examine data. The data from the interviews were analyzed and examined using principles of grounded, open coding discussed above. I used open coding, which usually takes place concurrently during the data analysis progression to carefully make implications among notions while transferring those (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). As the coding takes place, I compiled a coding list. For this study, themes were developed by constantly comparing the answers of the data.

3.12 Open coding

According to Flick (2014), in open coding, "the first step aims at expressing data and phenomena in the form of concepts" (p.404). For example, this is achieved by listing the responses of the participants. This step taken to provide greater strength to the coding techniques. Second, I examined and analyze the data collected from the participant responses. Third, I labeled the main themes of the responses. The data were open coded inductively to identify categories. For Mertens (2005), "open coding is the part of analysts that pertains specifically to naming and categorizing phenomena through close examination of data. During this phase, the data are broken down into discrete parts, closely examined, compared for similarities and differences, and questions are asked about the phenomena as reflected in the data" (p. 424). Fourth, I examined the main theme against the data in the transcription looking for patterns and codes. And fifth, I used the information to describe a coding table. The coding table included the taxonomies categorizing the types of usage, perception, experience, and service. Examples of the participants responses along with definitions, and the categories are shown below for each research questions.

Table 1 Coding Schemes: Immigrant Survey, and Librarian Survey, Interview, and Focus Group

Research Question (RQ) 1, What are the desired types of library services immigrants' who are underemployed and with limited English-speaking skills would like to see in library services?

Categories of types (examples)	Definition	Immigrant quotes (examples)
Language and literacy programs	Immigrant seeking service for learning language and literacy	*I am currently participating in a free English course provided by the library. I waited for more than two years before*

		waiting for the application. The waiting time was too long. (P5)
Access to books, ideas, information and education	Immigrant seeking access for books, ideas, information and educational program.	*Providing more materials in other languages. (P5)*
Technology classes	Immigrant desired service for technology	*Too many people want to use the computers in the afternoon and there are not enough computers. (P15)*
Government grant to open a business	Immigrant seeking service for assistance with opening new business	*I would love to know if libraries provide information to help me open my business. (P4)*
Programs for youth using the library	Immigrant seeking service for programs, and services for their youth	*I brought my kid to story time in the library before Covid-19, and I think this helps her learning a lot. (P5)*
Information on immigration process	Immigrant seeking service for immigration resources	*I think that the public library provides technology, books, citizenship class, English class. (P22)*
Information about finding jobs	Immigrant seeking service for employment assistance	*I know that public libraries provide most of the things people might need help with such as information about certain things, maybe look for jobs. (P28)*

Research Question (RQ) 2, What role do public librarians play in engaging underemployed immigrants and with limited English-speaking skills in their daily lives to meet their information needs?

Categories of roles (examples)	Definition	Librarian quotes (examples)

Providing books and other resources	Sets of actions by librarians to provide collection materials to immigrants	*We tell them 'take all the books you want; pick all the books you want. We have all these interesting programs going on, you could come every day" (FGP2).*
Actions to engage immigrants	Sets of actions by librarians to promote the library	*I did outreach, a presentation on our library services for children who are coming to school, and those going back to school in September, and the parents who needs to have complete their GED or high school equivalency exam (IP2).*
English learning classes and programs	Sets of actions by librarians to promote ESOL and other literacy program	*I also meet older immigrants looking to take their GED high school equivalency diploma preparation test. They would at times volunteer and tell me that they want to apply for a job that requests this certification. I would direct them to the appropriate agencies (IP8).*
Parenting programs for immigrants	Sets of actions by librarians to inform parents of support programs in educating their children	*Immigrants want programs, all sorts of programs, especially programs for their children. They really want story time; they want arts and crafts. They ask us for insights on the [US] education system and any programs that will help their children to learn (FGP3).*
Need welcoming attitude of library staff to continue	Sets of actions by librarians to encourage immigrants to engage	*First of all, I smile. And because many immigrants, who don't speak English*

	them.	*very well feel shy or nervous. So, we have to welcome with a smile and by saying hello (FGP4).*
Overseeing computer access	Sets of actions by librarians to give greater ICT participation	*I teach computer classes at the Central Library, and a large part of my students are members of the immigrant community, and they are very passionate about learning computers (IP7).*
Immigration books and programs	Sets of actions by librarians to promote immigration programs and resources	*We have a large foreign language collection, a large stock that includes South Asian, South, East Asian, and Eastern Europe. So that's one of the services we provide (FGP1).*

Research Question (RQ) 3, What are the challenges public librarians face in providing services to underemployed immigrants with limited English-speaking skills?

Categories of challenges (examples)	Definition	Librarian quotes (examples)
Limited required skillset among new librarians	More senior librarian perceived lack of ability of new librarian to satisfy the information need of the patron.	*It's a different situation when you trying to conduct the reference interview in a public library setting. So I think for new librarians coming out of library school new to know how to approach immigrants…And I think as country becomes more diverse, library schools would probably need to change their curriculum a*

		little bit and try to do classes that are more practical, like how to work with diverse populations (FGP4)..
Limited budget for immigrant programs	Librarian perceived lack of ability to provide more programs because of budget issue.	*These services do meet the immigrant's needs, but because of budget cuts, there is more demand than the library can handle. We created the expectation that we can help, and then we let it drop; cuts in programs for immigrants seem to hurt them the most, especially for English language learning programs (SP17).*
Limited staff who speak languages of immigrants	Librarian perceived lack of ability to communicate with immigrant because of language barriers.	*The language barrier is one of the biggest challenges. Many times, immigrants are unable to express themselves clearly in English and many of the staff members are not versed in many of the languages spoken by immigrants (SP11).*
Lack of awareness of the changes in their community ethnic profile	Librarian inability to enquire about their local ethnic group. Failure to keep up to date with composition of community ethnic group.	*We did not realized that there were immigrants from that part of the world using our library (IP 9).*
Being all things to all people	Librarian perceived lack of ability to provide services to diverse communities.	*It's hard taking the [reference] desk, and conduct programs at the same time (IP10).*
Creating programs in different languages	Librarian perceived lack of ability to creating successful programs for immigrants.	*I don't always know what program will work for this community but I try to create programs I think they will enjoy (SP4).*
Staffing issues	Librarian perceived lack of ability to provide adequate service because they are	*With limited staff and budgets, we are a force to provide basic library*

	short staffed.	*services we believe will be useful to the immigrant communities. We partnered and focused on the local nonprofit agencies and community advocates to promote them to the new arrivals when they come in. Also, with the help of receiving private grants, we expand outreach and collections where they are needed. (FGP4)*

Table 2 Coding Schemes: From Lower Level Categories to Open Coding of examples for Immigrant Survey, and Librarian Survey, Interview, and Focus Group

Research Question (RQ) 1, What are the desired types of library services immigrants' who are underemployed and with limited English-speaking skills would like to see in library services?

Lower Level Categories	Open Coding
Access to books, ideas, information and Education Accessible service Give information Hard to find answers in library Have quicker response times Health, education and community	Seeking accessible information
Access to computer Learn using technology Access to library public wireless network	Seeking technology access
Discussion groups Diverse and meaningful activities Spanish concert Provide international language classes NY ID card Provide insurance information for new immigrants	Seeking multicultural programs and services
Provide books in my language	Seeking multicultural collections

Enjoy reading newspapers in my language	
Providing books to learn English Providing space to learn English Classes to learn English	Seeking ESOL classes
Information about citizenship Information about immigration classes Print out immigration forms	Seeking immigration and citizenship programs
Finding information on finding jobs Free OSHA courses Organize job trainings Referrals outside information Resume writing	Seeking job and career assistance
Information about opening my business Free money to open business Information on real estate investing	Seeking small businesses help
A place for kids to study. Kids program Kids visiting the library A place for doing homework	Seeking services for immigrants with children
Serving breakfast and lunch to community Provide services to community Help the community to find useful Information Helps to find useful things Libraries help the community	Seeking facilitate community life
Yoga programs Do craft and learn new things Enjoy just being in the library	Leisure activities

Research Question (RQ) 2, What role do public librarians play in engaging underemployed immigrants and with limited English-speaking skills in their daily lives to meet their information needs?

Lower Level Categories	Open Coding
Suggestions for improvement in service delivery of library Most beneficial services for immigrants appropriate outreach opening library cards outreach services social services	Eagerness in providing library resources

translation services Being a Cultural Center	
Job readiness programs Sharing citywide job training Resources Providing library-led job trainings Information about jobs available Experience in current job Civil services exam using computers for job search Information about education related opportunities Information about opening up small business Job opportunities Preparation books	Providing information about employment small businesses
ESOL Programs GED preparation test ESOL classes book discussions English language programs enough classes giving helpful information simple language	Facilitating access to literacy programs
Places to file Immigration papers Need help filing out citizenship forms Help with immigration questions Helping immigrants with application Immigration program Parenting programs for immigrants Immigration information classes programs services immigrants providing books and other resources using Internet translation tools social services Citizenship books and classes More resources for English learning More citizenship classes Role of public libraries in engaging underemployed immigrants	Facilitating access to immigration resources
Information about tutoring kids Immigrant's children do English Translation for them Parents are interested to encourage children to go to library	Providing resources for adult immigrants and their teens, and their younger children

Children ask queries about their homework computer access English language classes public library services Desired library resources English learning books and programs Resources for adults, teens, and kids Information about educational and other support services Programs for Children Language resources	
computer access Computer learning Computer classes Online outreach Online translation resources Resource and service provided by libraries	Supporting computer learning for immigrant patron
Compassion, respect and understanding Make patron feel at ease to get information in their language attending children's programs body language customer services Be patient Being welcoming and compassionate serving community Be welcoming Highly diverse	Offering empathetic services
Promoting remote learning in different languages Technology classes Online reference computer classes digital translators remote programs Community meeting over Zoom Beware of digital divide Telephone services	Closing the digital divide

Research Question (RQ) 3, What are the challenges public librarians face in providing services to underemployed immigrants with limited English-speaking skills?

Lower Level Categories	Open Coding
Reference services not great More support staff than librarian No skilled immigrants No bilingual adult staff Not enough diverse staff No front desk to great immigrant in library	Staffing shortage
Not enough International language books Need to offer programs in more languages No enough library hours Stress of job	Budget cuts
Required skillset among new librarians Reduce difference between library school and practical work Programs on adjusting to American culture Be able to communicate in different languages Translators are available at library Children programs Helping patrons promoting library services reference librarian Experience as librarian In person meetings Suggestions to improve service delivery of libraries Trainings from City Reference services Keeping abreast with immigrant policies	Staff training
Referring to adult learning center Immigrant communities immigration services several languages Material in different languages Arranging talks of successful immigrants Programs in different languages Actions to engage immigrants	Library outreach to immigrant
Training multicultural etiquettes Programs to understand different ethnic communities Seek information about types of local immigrants coming to library Asian languages Cultural programs	Unfamiliarity with immigrant culture

Foreign language books Immigrant communities Spanish classes Cross cultural books Ethnic diversity in demographics Majority from Central Asia and south America Rapid changes in ethnic profiles Lists of immigrants	
Overwhelming to understand the library system Need welcoming attitude of library staff to continue Negative perspective of immigrants regarding library Speak slowly with immigrants	Immigrant perception of library services
Library schools need to change curriculum Enough computer Overseeing computer access Translation tools Chat services More access to data bases Give VPN access to operate from home as well	Librarian role as technology access trainer

3.13. Trustworthiness and Validity

For many qualitative researchers, the rigors of qualitative research is closely related to trustworthiness (Harding, & Whitehead, 2013). However, there has not been a single method among those researchers to assess quality in qualitative research because there is both an element of subjectivity and rigorousness resulting in a range of different approaches. Although it is more aligned with quantitative research, this research uses validity to evaluate this research as it is an acceptable tool among qualitative researchers. For Creswell & Miller (2000), research may be considered valid in three ways. First, through the lens of the researcher (example in triangulation), the lens of the study participants (i.e. member checking) and through the lens of the reviewers, or readers.

The validity of this study is bound to the information experience of immigrants toward public library. I used a context-dependent strategy to present the case of this research and uncover meaning. Questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups were used as strategies to find evidence of the same problem. According to Flick (2014), using multiple methods for analyzing the same data may lead to "converging results, complementary results, and contradictions" (p. 189). Though for Yin (2017), the advantage to use multiple sources of evidence goes beyond appreciating case studies but allowed a researcher to " have an opportunity to pursue a critical methodological practice—to develop *converging lines of inquiry*" (p. 127). Those different data sources increased validity for this dissertation through the examination of the evidence. This process is also referred to as triangulation (Creswell & Creswell, 2017, p. 200).

Since each interview is unique, attaining reliability is not an easy task. In a qualitative approach, interviews are combined with other methods to increase reliability, and internal validity, where researchers rely on triangulation. This research used interviews and questionnaires as data sources for triangulation. "Triangulation of observations with other sources of data…increase the expressiveness of the data gathered" (Flick, 2014, p. 311). With triangulation, I obtained a more reliable view of people's experiences or perceptions. In fact, in qualitative research, it is possible to combine more than one data collection method to see how this affirms or denies the immigrant library users' perception with realities, such as in this study, which uses interviews and questionnaires. Having a holistic understanding of where those users come from informationally, vis-a-vis the different services at those libraries, allows library researchers to put their research focus on the user. As Becker (1996) indicated:

> If we don't find out from people what meanings they are giving to things, we will still talk about those meanings. In that case, we will, of necessity, invent them, reasoning that the people we are writing about must have meant this or that, or they would not have done the things they did. But it is inevitably epistemologically dangerous to guess at what could be observed directly. The danger is that we will guess wrong, that what looks reasonable to us will not be what looked reasonable to them. This happens all the time, mainly because we are not those people and do not live in their circumstances. (p. 58).

3.14 Inter-Coder Reliability

An initial coding sheet was useful to sort out the significant characteristic of the data. For example, the coding sheet might indicate among other categories information about the participants, the types of information the participants sought, the location they found such information, the strategies they employ to look for such information and the challenges they believed they would have faced if they sought help from public libraries. In addition, I presented the information of the main categories with a coding scheme showing the types of categories, definitions, and examples (direct quotes from participants). The data for the focus group, the interviews, and the questionnaires was uploaded to data analysis software such as NVivo, and used for coding the whole data set. To ensure that the instruments I created were valid, and rigorous and transparent, the research design plan called for collaboration with an experienced coder (coder 2) knowledgeable on instrument design to gain insight to increase the validity of the instrument design. This allowed objective analysis through the scrutiny of the same data set and

compared the consistency of their findings. It is referred to as intercoder reliability and is defined as the "numerical measure of the agreement between different coders regarding how the same data should be coded." (O'Connor & Joffe, 2020. P. 2). After independently working on the data from the open coding, I took 25 percent a subset of such data from the interviews, and the open-ended portions of the questionnaires. I removed the codes, duplicate the file, and assigned the same files to coder 2. I instructed coder 2 to use NVivo to code the data based on the coding scheme categories that I initially created. Coder 2 checked, consulted, and examined the data. My file and the experienced coder file were examined using different computers but the same type of data analysis software such as NVivo to compute the reliability. Other coders have used SPSS, a statistical software, for data coding. I have worked with both, but qualitative researchers have generally used NVivo which is why I chose it for this study. Theme, similarities, and differences were discussed between the two of us in addition to the categorical codes and their inter-coder agreement. I used the Cohen Kappa's (K) Coefficiency available in NVivo to calculate reliability which fell with the measure K= 0.80. According to Ivankova (2015), "an acceptable statistic for inter-rater reliability when using Cohen's Kappa is higher than 0.7" (p. 242). Once an agreement has been made between the two of us, I coded the entire data set. Table 1 provides a summary of the research questions, the techniques for collecting data, and the corresponding analysis method I used for each question.

Table 3 Methods of data collection and analysis

Research Questions	Data Collection Techniques	Analysis Method
What are the desired types of library services immigrants' who are underemployed and with limited English-speaking skills would like to see in	Questionnaires	Taxonomies of types of factors Taxonomies of types of perception

library services?		Open coding
What role do public librarians play in engaging underemployed immigrants and with limited English-speaking skills in their daily lives to meet their information needs?	Focus Group Interviews Questionnaires	Taxonomies of the types of experiences Open coding
What are the challenges public librarians face in providing services to underemployed immigrants with limited English-speaking skills?	Focus Group Interviews Questionnaires	Taxonomies of types of library service needs Open coding

3.15 Challenges for the research

Following approval from the Institutional Review Board at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and NYPL in September of 2020, I sought to recruit participants for my study. After conducting the pilot study with some success, recruitment of additional participants that fit the criteria was challenging. I was not able to distribute the questionnaires and set up the boxes at the proposed locations as I had proposed. New York State has imposed very strict guidelines for indoor and outdoor gatherings statewide due COVID-19 that were still in place at this time. This led to significant disruptions for public service agencies. Many organizations I reached to made special arrangements for their staff to work remotely, limited access to who can come inside their facilities, checked people's temperature upon entering facilities, and scheduled their customers by appointment only. This meant that these locations were not interacting with their customers

the same way as they did in 2019 and were no longer providing the same support services to immigrant populations. As part of my librarian job, every month since March of 2020 I have been meeting with the leaders of about 50 Queens-based immigrants' organizations via Zoom. Using my contacts and the support of elected local officials, I appealed for help with this research, but only one group responded. As a result, I did not make any progress in collecting the data during fall 2020. Seeing no end in sight I saw instead an opportunity to change the research design to fit the circumstances.

The collection of data, although successful, was not without difficulties. The revised research design called for the participation of both immigrants and public librarians. The plan was to conduct two surveys to be completed at the same time. However, I had no control over the rate at which the two groups would respond to the call for participation. As the pandemic impacted public librarians, I was always certain of their participation, and as to the best ways to reach out to them. On the other hand, my best approach to reach immigrant participants was still to keep connecting to possible patrons in the same neighborhoods where I was previously unsuccessful with in-person research. Because of their high concentrations of immigrant businesses and resources, some neighborhood such as Flushing, Jackson heights, and Corona provided better opportunities for success. The best opportunity was to recruit immigrant participants in Queens by engaging members the immigrant communities even though they had been hard hit by the pandemic. Attempts to promote the research online were unsuccessful. I reached out to the webmaster coordinators and social media point persons of immigrant online forums and they declined to post my research. The reasons for this varied, from a belief that it was a low priority during these critical and perilous times, or that it was not relevant to their online posting policies. Many just did not bother to reply.

Figure 8 Signs placed during the pandemic in front of a prominent immigrant organization

.

The revised design opened the doors for immigrants who have visited public libraries. I assumed that some immigrants who use the public libraries in-person and have access to the Internet at home would try to connect with our virtual services during the pandemic. The assumption was based on the fact that they might have already been familiar with our virtual resources. At the public library, when I interact with patrons inside (on the public floor) and outside of the building (when doing outreach), I can tell that - maybe because of a combination of the way I look, my accent and my demeanor - some immigrant community members feel at ease. This identity lets them know that I am one of them, an insider to their experience,

perception, and understanding of public library services, but also an outsider who works with an institution that they might not be familiar with. As an insider, it means that I have prior intimate knowledge of their experiences and that I understand their issues. In some cases, they also want my personal contact information because they see me in a context of their culture. This allowed me to personally reach out to immigrant community influences with whom I worked in my job as a librarian. I went to different neighborhoods with high concentrations of diverse immigrant groups and posted fliers on the community boards of supermarkets, shops, and other essential businesses. I distributed fliers to any location that was allowing fliers in the brochure rack during the pandemic. The responses were slow, but they started coming in.

Finally, I reached out to the administrators of the Queens Library's New Americans Program (NAP) and asked them to promote the study to their online students and patrons taking part in the virtual ESOL programs and adult learning classes. Queens Library managed a very active virtual program for immigrants during the pandemic. The staff at NAP was very enthusiastic in promoting the program to their students and some teachers even gave classrooms time for students to fill out the questionnaire.

Another issue was the type of survey itself. Many questions of the surveys were open-ended. It meant that immigrant participants had to take their time to fill in their responses. Those with slow or spotty Internet connections were at a disadvantage. This might explain why the questionnaires of several immigrant participants were recorded by the software as incomplete. As a result, their limited responses could not be used in the data analysis.

Participant librarian responses arrived faster but the librarian participation was not without its challenges. While it was expected that the librarians working with Queens Public

Library would be supportive, librarians working in other library systems took more time to respond than expected after the online invitation to take part went out to the New York Libraries Information Network (NYLINE), an email listserv widely popular with librarians working in the state. I continued to reach out to members of ethnic librarian groups, and the New York City's three labor unions groups for library staff, some of whom maintain active online forums.

Immigrant and the public librarian participants responded differently to the research during the pandemic. Until vaccines were widely distributed in New York City, recruitment of participants for the study was difficult even with the promotion of the gift card. Librarians were more willing to participate, although a lot less than expected, which was likely due to the stress and work overload many librarians experienced attempting to provide services during a pandemic.

3.16 Summary

Researching immigrant attitudes toward public libraries was no easy task. I used an exploratory qualitative case study design to answer the research questions. Studying the everyday information experiences of marginalized immigrants and their participation (or lack of) in public library services required a strong methodology. Once IRB approval was granted, the data was collected over a period of three months. Following two separate pilot studies, I was able to collect survey data for 30 immigrant participants. I then reached out to public librarians who serve immigrants and found they were very accessible online during this pandemic. I recruited 30 public librarians in the New York City area who were asked to take part in questionnaire, interview, and focus group data collection to provide librarian perspectives on

meeting the needs of recent immigrants. I used an open coding to directly analyze the data. The findings of these analyses will be examined in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4 Findings

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to understand the reasons why recent immigrants might use public libraries for their information needs. I identified three categories of desired types of library services, three categories of roles that public librarians play in engaging immigrants in their daily lives to meet their information needs, and three categories of challenging barriers public librarians face in providing services to underemployed immigrants. The research design used in this study was selected as the best match for the main research question; what are the information experiences of immigrants with limited job skills, limited income, and limited English-speaking skills, and how do libraries serve or fail to serve their information needs? Three sub research questions (RQ 1, RQ 2, and RQ 3) guided this analysis:

> **Research Question (RQ) 1**, What are the desired types of library services immigrants' who are underemployed and with limited English-speaking skills would like to see in library services?
>
> **Research Question (RQ) 2**, What role do public librarians play in engaging underemployed immigrants and with limited English-speaking skills in their daily lives to meet their information needs?
>
> **Research Question (RQ) 3**, What are the challenges public librarians face in providing services to underemployed immigrants with limited English-speaking skills?

In this chapter, I provide the findings of the three research questions, and the themes derived from the data collection. This qualitative research included two sets of data. The former

is from immigrant participants through the surveys, and the latter is from librarians through the surveys, interviews, and the focus group. In that order, in the first part of the presentation of the data, I focused on the responses of the immigrants before moving to the librarians. When I described the themes, it was important to give voices to the participants in this research. The pseudonyms attached to the participants were included for analysis and to support the arguments.

4.2 Research Question (RQ) 1, what are the desired types of library services immigrants underemployed and with limited English-speaking skills would like to see in library services?

4.2.1 Immigrant data analysis

There is no single way of analyzing data in qualitative research (Schutt, 2018). My examination of the immigrant survey data included both a manual and a computer-based thematic data analysis. Using both methods is advantageous. It is recommended that scholars who do not have a lot of experience with thematic analysis start out with manual analysis (Saldaña, 2021). The first part of my analysis began with manual analysis. The simplicity of the word document allows me to work with the document unobstructed instead of taking advantage right away of the many options available in a sophisticated software. When working with manual coding, there is a sense of control and ownership that the researcher has with analyzing the data might feel more in especially that the amount of data in the survey is manageable. For the second part of my immigrant data treatment, I used a CAQDAS (computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software) to gain insight and to unpack and identify themes I might not have discovered.

I downloaded the responses of the surveys as a Word document. I read the responses several times to immerse myself with the respondents' answers. Although the survey responses were on a computer screen, I felt as if their responses spoke to me directly. As previously noted,

I serve immigrants in my daily work. Because I am also an immigrant, I was conscious of my biases, and I understood I needed to be aware of them since the inductive analysis is very reflective.

I conducted the data analysis in a qualitative, descriptive manner through a constant comparison approach (Glaser, 1965) which led from the coding and theming of the smallest set of data to refined and developed sets of higher categories connected to the research questions. I started with a set of the first five respondents. The textual data included both short and long answers to the open-ended questions. I used the participants' words, part of their response, and applied a code. When some responses were found more ideal for theming, I applied one. Because the participants' native language was not English (and considering the different native languages and cultures of those participants, and their exposure to the English language), I understood that some immigrants would be more judicious than others in their choice of words because their range of English vocabulary may not have been as advanced as a native speaker. I gave the same weight to each individual immigrant's data. Thus, my intent was comprehensiveness as opposed to word frequency in my data analysis.

As stated, I grouped portions of the responses and assigned a code, looking at the words they used, the types of questions they were answering to describe the library services in light of the research questions, and the similarity of the concepts. I also assigned a theme to these fragments of ideas describing desired services. I went back and forth to the research question, the list of codes, and the themes to identify new emerging concepts or redundancy. I applied the codes with another set of five participants' data, comparing the portion of the new texts coded with the previous set taken from five responses. I refined the existing codes and developed the new ones. Then, I applied the codes to the whole data set. Any insignificant data, unfinished

surveys, and the few ineligible participants who went ahead and filled the questionnaires were discarded. The immigrant survey initially called for 20 participants with a preference for 30. As I reviewed the upcoming responses, I saw the need to gather as much data as possible. I also saw they were gradually providing new elements of information useful to the study. Since there would not be other forms of data collection from immigrants as a result of the limitation of the pandemic, it was necessary to gather as much data as possible from the survey.

I uploaded the raw data in Excel, without the coding for the thirty responses from the manual coding, into QSR NVivo. I purchased the student version of NVivo 12 Plus for Windows because of the range of features it provided for qualitative analysis, and I had used the program previously in other data analysis assignments. As a qualitative data analysis software, NVivo has many advantages. It allows a researcher to sort and keep track of the data set, acquire significant information from the database, explain the data through visualization, shows the visualize data at a different set of the interpretive process, visually represent the associations between the themes, and report the findings from the data (Jackson & Bazeley, 2019, Nvivo, 2020). I gave the project a new title and coded the documents. I also used the auto coding featured in NVivo and the sentiment analysis to analyze the documents. I kept the nodes that were different than the manual coding and deleted those I felt were similar or not relevant to the manual coding. At this point, new concepts emerged that I believed the automatic option did not capture. I created new nodes to the selected portion of the texts and went back to the documents back and forth.

With both the manual and the NVivo analysis, I had a full picture of the experiences of the participants. For RQ1, eleven themes of desired types of library services emerged from the data analysis. As table 1 shows, the themes are grouped into major categories. After presenting the findings, the quotes are presented to illustrate those individual themes (subcategories). The

selection of those quotes was based on how fitting they are to the specific themes. Each theme has at least one quote, but several themes have more quotes depending on how a particular theme addressed the issue at hand. For the immigrant data, "P" refers to immigrant Participant, and for the librarian data, "IP" refers to Interview Participant, “SP", Survey Participant, and "FGP" refers to Focus Group Participant. The participant is linked to the quote without the mention of their real name to preserve confidentiality.

Table 4. Categories of Desired Types of Library Services

1. Services providing opportunities for programs and collection accessibility
    - Accessible information
    - Multicultural programs and services
    - Multicultural collections
    - Leisure activities
2. Services providing opportunities for learning and information
    - Technology access
    - ESOL classes
    - Services for immigrants with children
    - Facilitate community life
3. Services providing opportunities for practical skills
    - Immigration and citizenship Assistance
    - Job and carrier assistance
    - Small business help

4.2.2 Services providing opportunities for programs and collection accessibility

4.2.2.1 Accessible Information

This research found that immigrants were interested in library service as an accessible space where information could be readily obtained. Immigrants see the library as a place where they find resources, but they were not always sure what types of information librarians were willing to help them find. This indicates that some immigrants do not fully grasp the role of public libraries in providing information access. As far as they know, libraries are about books, and ESOL classes. Immigrants seek information in a way to which they are accustomed, therefore library programs might need to be better clarified:

> *I would love to know what the public library does, I didn't know the public library serves the community other than through its books.* (P10)

> *I'd love to know more about the role of public libraries, especially how they help immigrants like myself. I never knew I could have gone to a public library for help such as job search, immigration process, etc. If this is the case, I would have appreciated this help and now that I have had to figure it out myself, I would love to give back by participating in these programs.* (P7)

I found that some participants do not go to libraries because they believe that public libraries cannot provide them with some types of information. The immigrant participants' responses show they carry some uncertainty regarding their information needs and libraries. To illustrate this, in response to the survey question "when you need information (for example finding a school, health coverage, a job, or anything else), do you always go to the public library?" 40.00% of the participants said yes, but 46.67% said no. Although their level of satisfaction with public libraries was lower, they had a moderate view of public libraries indicating that they may be on the fence regarding libraries in general. For example, in reference to information obtained outside of the library (Figure 9), 75% were at least "somewhat satisfied."

Participants who were not sure about information outside of the library made the following comments:

> *The outside information is not that much authentic* (P6)

> *There is no guaranty* [sic] *that the outside information is always good, or the last word* (P8).

Table 5 When you need information (for example finding a school, health coverage, a job, or anything else), do you always go to the public library?

Answer	Percentage	Number
Yes	40.00%	12
No	46.67%	14
Did not respond	13.33%	4
Total	100%	30

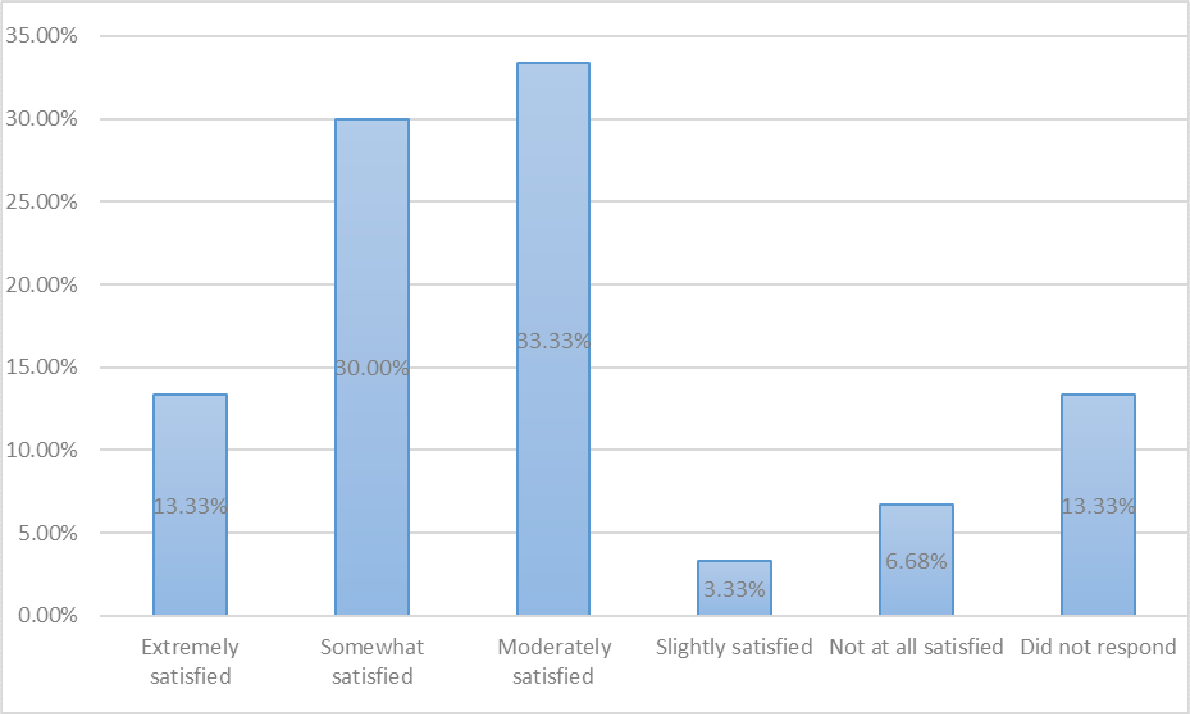

Figure 9 How satisfied have you been with the information you obtain outside of the library?

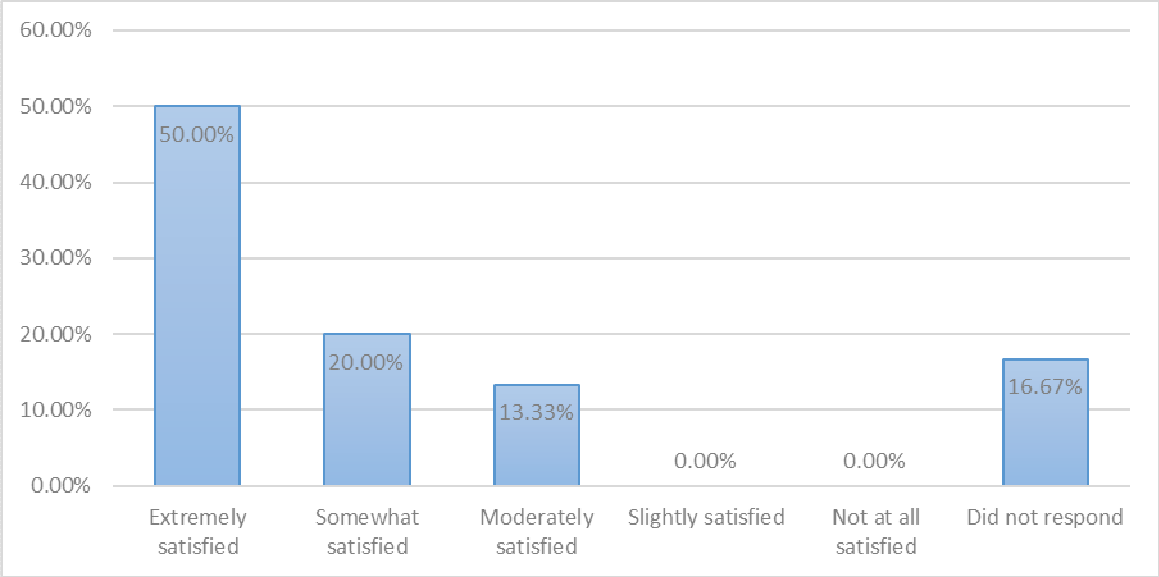

Figure 10 How satisfied have you been with the information you obtain inside of the library?

4.2.2.2 Multicultural Programs and Services

The study confirmed that multicultural programs and services are a priority for immigrants when using public libraries. In deciphering what is meant by multicultural programs, I looked for signs in my data analysis that, in their responses, the participant desires library programs and services for their families or themselves in a language other than English or activities offered in English that target immigrants within cultural events or context. For example, New York City partners with libraries to promote the IDNYC, a free identification card for the city's residents, ages 10 and over, offering access to a wide number of services and programs. This card is not specifically for immigrants. However, it has a great appeal to documented and undocumented immigrant New Yorkers. Consequently, the need for a multicultural approach has been recognized in public library services for generations (Du Mont,

et al., 1994). Multicultural programs help libraries reach a diverse target audience. As long as staff at those libraries create these programs in a sensitive manner, immigrants usually respond by participating in large numbers (Smallwood & Becnel, 2013). Libraries are known to build their programming calendars around native immigrants' cultural or national celebrations that highlight a specific country, culture, and languages. This research showed that having multicultural programs and services that facilitate their greater understanding of their new American lives are very important. One participant replied:

> *I enjoy seeing artists from my home country come and perform at the library, and programs in my language.* (P12)

4.2.2.3 Multicultural collections

Similarly, immigrants seek a collection that reflects its reading desire. In my analysis, I coded similar wordings such as "provide books in my language" or "enjoy reading newspapers in my language." By multicultural collections, I include the desire for electronic resources or onsite resources, collections in a language other than English, bilingual books, and English resources that highlight immigrant community members' cultures. When their responses just mentioned books not in that specific context, I assumed that their desire was to include both English language collections and international language collections. As a matter of fact, several of the participants whose native language is not English indicated that English books were one of the primary resources they look for at the library after books in their languages. Because over 50 percent of immigrants did not take part in library programs, it might be argued that either the programs at the library were not effective, or the reasons for their library visit might be because

it is not program related. Perhaps they are there simply to use the Internet, browse the collection, reserve a book, or just to check out materials.

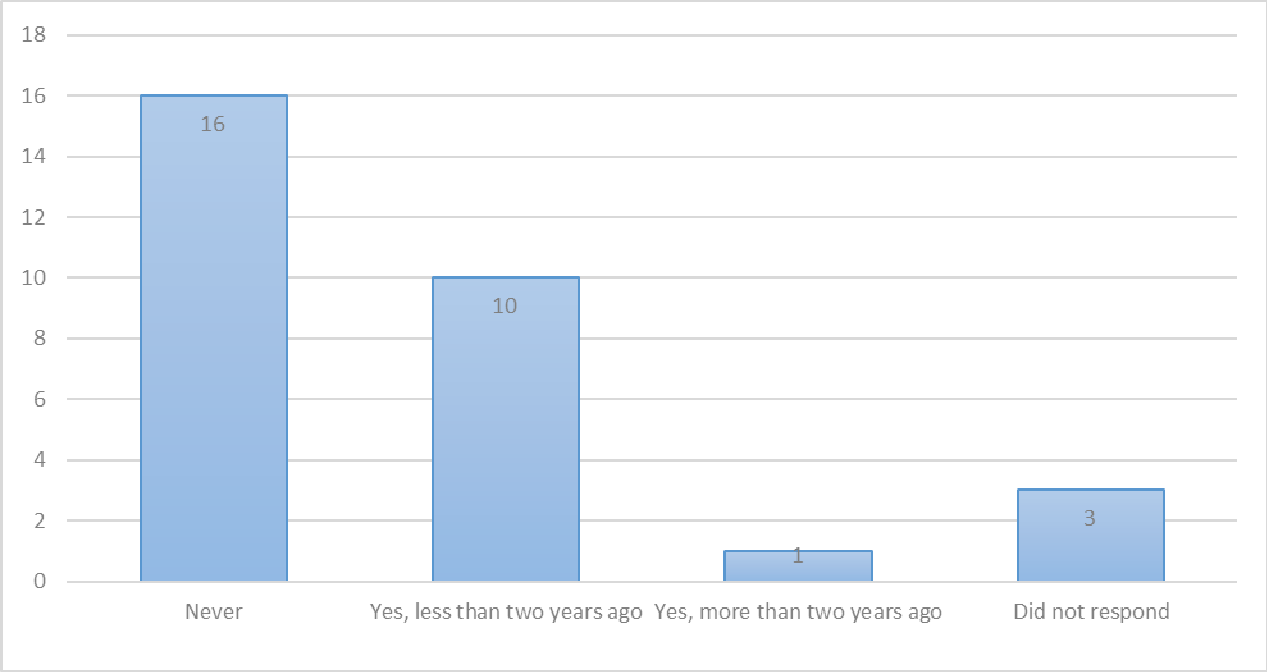

Figure 11 Have you, personally, EVER participated in an event inside or outside of the library such as a library book fair, bookmobile, or other library-related services?

4.2.2.4 Leisure activities

The finding shows immigrants who visit libraries consider it a leisure activity with great value to their lives. Many see libraries as recreational places that provide entertainment and leisure. According to Hayes, and Morris, (2005), "how often people visit the library can signify how important it is in their leisure time." (p.133). The majority of the respondent (66.67 %) visited the library between daily and about once a month (Table 6). As table 7 shows, among the 28 participants who answered the question of whether they have ever visited a public library in the US, 5 participants (16.67%) indicated that they have never visited a public library. The data indicated that 23 participants (76.67%) answered: "yes" that they have ever visited a public

library in the US. When asked "why have you not visited a public library in the United States?" Some of their answers were:

> *Because I don't know about libraries in the United States. (P15)*
>
> *I live on long island. (P13)*
>
> *I think of libraries as places to borrow books from and I've never needed to borrow a book. (P10)*

This suggests that nonlibrary users might not have a full understanding of the scope of services public libraries provide. It might be because people from their personal network do not visit public libraries. Another reason might be that they are not aware of the nearest public libraries around then (and did not care to find out). Finally, it might be that libraries were still perceived to be only about books which they might not want. In any case, the perception of libraries as a leisure space might suggest to some immigrants that those activities are not essential and thus explain the reasons for not being at the library. But for those who have visited and consider libraries as a leisure place to be, they stated:

> *I want more fun activities. Money is difficult to come by, I cannot afford to pay extra for concerts, but I am able to come to the library to enjoy concerts and arts programs in my local library. (P12)*
>
> *Public libraries are helpful by providing and assist us with different kinds of information that help us in our activities. (P9)*
>
> *I just enjoy being at the library. (P26)*

Table 6 Please indicate how often you use public library services?

Answer	Percentage	Number
Daily	6.67%	2
Up to several times a week	33.33%	10

About once a week	10.00%	3
About once a month	16.67%	5
About once every three months	3.33%	1
About once every six months	3.33%	1
About once a year	3.33%	1
Less than once a year	10.00%	3
Did not respond	13.33%	4
Total	100%	30

Table 7 Have you ever visited a public library in the United States?

Answer	Percentage	Number
Yes	76.67%	23
No	16.67%	5
Did not respond	6.67%	2
Total	100%	30

4.2.3 Services providing opportunities for learning and information

4.2.3.1 Technology access

The research found that immigrants associated public libraries with technology access. The pool of respondents in this research understood that libraries play an important role in providing technology and Internet access. Libraries provide access to free technology and trained staff. The issue for public libraries is that during busy times, there might not be enough computer stations at some of its busiest time. Most public computers at the public libraries in NYC have a time limit. Public libraries have limited technology items such as tablets and wireless Hotspots, and they come in with severe restrictions to users. According to one participant:

> *Too many people want to use the computers in the afternoon and there are not enough computers*. (P15)

Others point to a lack of convenience in using library technologies. They point out that libraries provided free technology but that it was more expedient for them to find their information over the Internet without setting foot inside the library building knowing that they will not be available. Sometimes the issue is also unreliable Internet connections because of the volume of users. This is an issue known to frustrate both library staff and users (Bertot et al., 2016). The issue of spotty connections at home affects all library users (Bennett-Kapusniak, 2018). While the response data shows that some immigrants have a high expectation of public libraries, there was a dilemma for this research. The survey had to be completed online and those with slow or spotty connections could not complete it because most public institutions offering Internet access were closed during the pandemic at the time this survey was available. The data might reflect that those with poor connections do not use online library services. For those immigrants, their expectations of public libraries are not always met:

> *It is hard to find answers in the library, I rather use the Internet*. (P27)

When their expectations are not met, the data suggests that they may seek it elsewhere. Those who do not use public libraries responded that the Internet was the first place they seek information. As figure 11 shows, the data suggest that increasingly they are bypassing families, and relatives and are looking online for their information needs, which is a change from previous ELIS research which suggests that to find critical information, immigrants interact at local ethnic places (Caidi et al., 2010; Pettigrew, 1999). With the increasing role that the Internet plays in the lives of people in general, immigrants might no longer primarily rely on small places in the community such as ethnic restaurants, coffee shops, and hair salons in their discovery of

important information. When asked where they go for help if not at the public library, the most frequently used words in their replies were: Internet, google, friends, website, business, churches, computer, family, government, relatives, and lawyers.

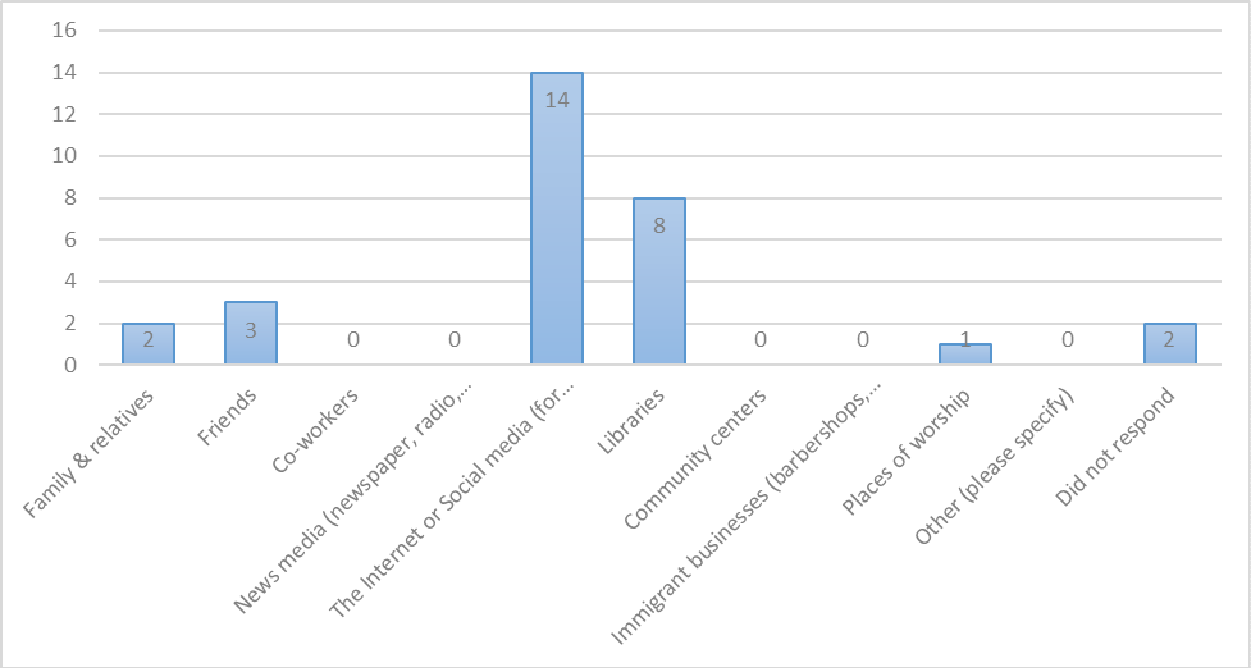

Figure 12 Where do you normally find information?

4.2.3.2 ESOL classes

ESOL programs are one of the most popular and historic programs used by immigrants in the New York City Public Library system. Classes normally conducted inside the public library were moved online for the duration of the pandemic. Although libraries are one of the many other not-for-profit institutions that provide free languages classes, it remains one of the most popular. It is common knowledge that there are free ESOL classes at the public libraries and they fill rapidly. For example, the Queens Public library runs one of the largest library-based English classes for immigrants in the country. As table 6 and table 7 show, over 66 percent of the

participants indicated they believe they were at a basic to an intermediary English level, and over 60 percent were in the country between 1 and 6 years. Adult immigrants whose English is not their first language do go about their daily life interacting with the larger native communities while being self-aware of their English limitations. In that respect, the research might indicate that regardless of their English level, newcomers whose native language is not English seek ways to better communicate and pursue information to improve their conditions. As some participants for this study were recruited through ESOL classes, many knew libraries provide ESOL classes. Some are frustrated that they lost important time in adapting to their new land because there are too few spots at the public libraries for computer classes. Commenting on what resources they believe the library provides, one participant noted:

> *I can get a lot of information and learn English. I can use a computer*. (P30).

And another added:

> *I am currently participating in a free English course provided by the library. I waited for more than two years before waiting for the application. The waiting time was too long.* (P5)

Table 8 What is your level of spoken English proficiency?

Answer	Percentage	Number
Speak English below the basic level	0.00%	0
Speak English at the basic level	30.00%	9
Speak English at the intermediate level	36.67%	11
Speak English at the proficient level	16.67%	5
Speak English at the advanced level	10.00%	3
Did not respond	6.67%	2
Total	100%	30

Table 9 How long have you been in the United States?

Answer	Percentage	Number
Less than 1 year	6.67%	2
1-3 years	30.00%	9
4-6 years	30.00%	9
7-10 years	26.67%	8
More than 10 years	0.00%	0
Did not respond	6.67%	2
Total	100%	30

4.2.3.3 Services for immigrants with children

Historically, public libraries have provided programming to both parents and children (including teens) which attract kids and teens living or going to school in the neighborhoods. Five respondents indicated that they see the values libraries provide in providing programs for immigrant youth. The tone of their responses suggests that these programs give the immigrant parent with children more confidence in educating their immigrant children in the US. When many parents with children, unfamiliar with their new environment, make a point of accompanying these children to the library, the study suggests that they engaged other immigrant parents in these information grounds. In reality, many library programs for children are also directed toward providing parental immigrants with skills and teaching them about a new educational system. These learning programs have been fairly successful in immigrant neighborhoods in New York. One participant listed children's programs as one program she looks forward to when coming to the library. Other participants stated that these library programs benefited their communities:

> *I firmly believe that the public library contributes to my local community. I am pleased to see some kids visiting the library*. (P30)

> *I brought my kid to storytime in the library before Covid-19, and I think this helps her learning a lot.* (P5)
>
> *I participated in the family literacy program. I participated in this program to do the craft with my kids and learn some new things.* (P13)

4.2.3.4 Facilitate community life

For immigrants, public libraries are one place to gather for community life. Immigrants understand that public libraries play an important role in their social inclusions (Beretta et al., 2018). The literature in this research already established that immigrants frequently interact with each other in locations such as ethnic restaurants, coffee shops, hair salons, and public libraries to get much needed information, interact with each other, and exchanged every day (Fisher et al., 2004a). The research discovers that public libraries are also used as a comfortable place for community life in the discovery of information. They see public libraries as a comfortable place where they feel welcome because there is nothing to present upon coming in, no membership due to access, and that public libraries are a place where they can make new friends and encounter old acquaintances. According to one participant:

> *I enjoy going to my community library. It contributes to my local community by providing services to the community and helps everyone. I feel great every time I go to my local library. I wish more people took advantage of the services. (P15)*

One of the survey questions asked the participants to "indicate how important or valuable public library services are to you", the responses were categorically positive. Nineteen of the participants use the words very "important", and very "useful", or very "valuable." One participant stated:

> *It's important because it helps a lot of people out with information.* (P 12)

The responses indicated that participants understood that libraries are about helping people. I discovered that for those with a positive view of public library services the words “people”, “help”, “information”, “need”, and “community” were the most frequently used to describe how they feel about libraries. The relationships between these terms are not hierarchical, but they are associated. The participants linked those concepts. One participant listed the role of the library as a “quiet place” to study. Yet, public libraries are not always quite as many are repurposed as social and cultural spaces for community activities.

A quiet place to study, borrow books, do research. (P10)

A place for kids to study. (P30)

The findings suggest that immigrants view the public library as a very important place to study. When asking about the role of the public libraries, the core mission of the library as a learning and studying institution is present in the replies. That mission, one participant believes is important for kids, if not for herself. In their everyday life, going to the library for the purpose of quiet study space is one reason for libraries to exist. In order to facilitate community life for immigrants, they have to know that those services exist. It suggests that library outreach efforts may have a long way to go (Table 8), as most immigrants learn of library services through their social network (Figure 13).

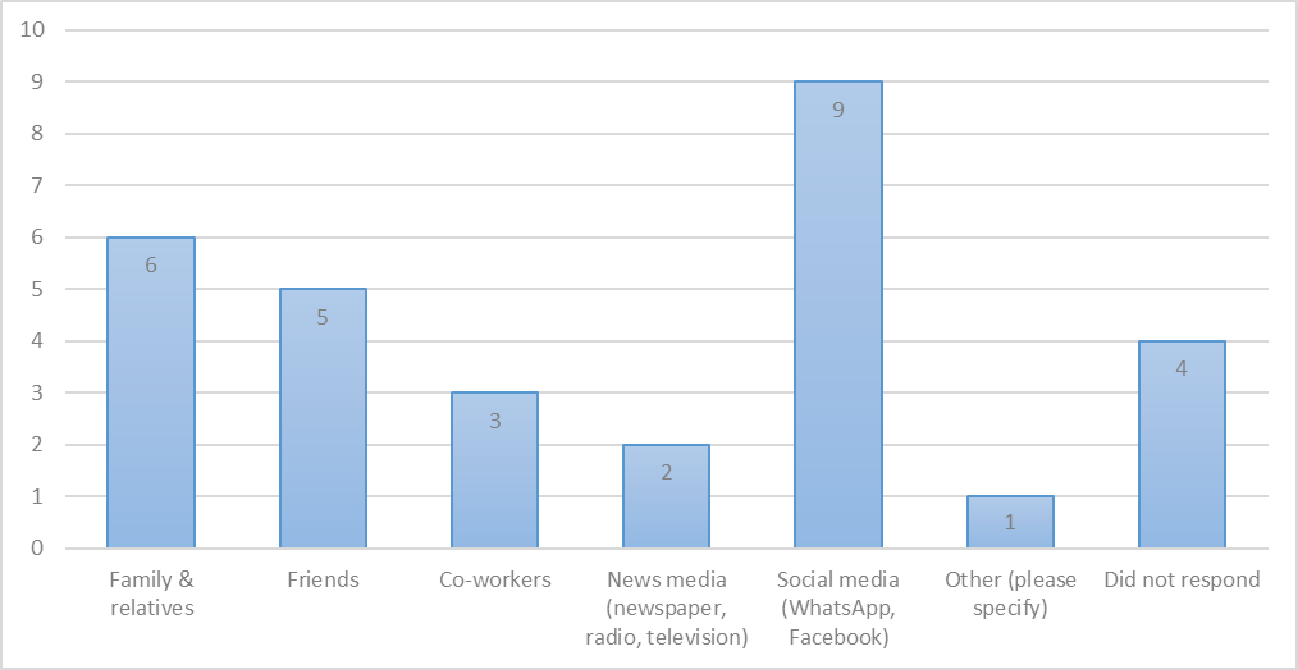

Figure 13 If you use the public library, how did you learn about public library services?

Table 10 Has a library staff member EVER visited you, an organization you belong to, a community center, or your workplace?

Answer	Percentage	Number
Yes	6.67%	2
No	83.33%	25
Did not respond	10.00%	3
Total	100%	30

4.2.4 Services providing opportunities for practical skills

4.2.4.1 Immigration and citizenship assistance

This research shows that immigrants have high regard for library programs that promote immigration legal services. Hiring an attorney and seeking legal help can be a costly endeavor and immigrant communities appreciate this free or low-cost help. Interestingly, only 10 percent

of participants in this study mentioned immigration and legal services as one of the programs they are aware of as being provided by public libraries. They mentioned it in conjunction with other library programs which might indicate that these patrons have an awareness that libraries provide an array of services:

> *I think that the public library provides technology, books, citizenship class, English class.* (P22)

4.2.4.2 Job and career assistance

Immigrants in the study reported that the need to find a job prompted them to use the library. Although not specifically an immigrant-targeted service, many public libraries provide training and workshops to enhance job readiness skills. Some libraries systems such as the Queens Public Library go a step further and incorporate job assistance and skills as part of their ESOL program and target English language learners from certain immigrants- centered industries such as health care and technology. Immigrants knew public libraries provided job preparation and skills programs as 40 percent of the participants stated they were aware of such programs.

> *I know that public libraries provide most of the things people might need help with such as information about certain things, maybe look for jobs.* (P28)

This study shows that immigrants with some college education use public libraries for job search as much as those who have at least a bachelor's degree. They seemed to understand that public libraries are one venue that provides job search and career help.

4.2.4.3 Small business help

The study shows that few immigrants knew public libraries facilitate access to find grants to open small businesses. In New York City, immigrant small businesses account for 47 percent of businesses at the same time immigrants New Yorkers represent 37 percent of the population (Torres-Springer & Agarwal, n.d.). Neighborhoods with a high concentration of immigrants have shown to have stronger business growth (DiNapoli, & Bleiwas,2010). New York City Department of small business collaborates with other local institutions such as libraries to provide various resources to immigrant business entrepreneurs. Librarians facilitate providing access to resources, but few immigrants take advantage of them. For example, with the question "indicate any other comments regarding your information need you would like to share ", one participant stated:

I would love to know if libraries provide information to help me open my business. (P4)

Another participant indicated that when searching for small business information, he relies on the Internet and business websites, as opposed to public libraries.

4.2.5 Summary

The research found three categories of services needed by immigrants who are underemployed and with limited English-speaking skills. Those categories are services providing opportunities to access programs and collections, services providing opportunities to be educated and to be informed, and services providing opportunities for practical skills. Different themes emerged from the analysis of this research such as: accessible information, multicultural programs and services, multicultural collections, leisure activities, technology access, ESOL classes, services for immigrants with children, facilitate community life, Immigration and citizenship, job and career assistance, and small business help. Immigrants seek

to quickly adapt to the American life. Immigrant participants look for practical solutions, and the way public librarians can help them is with a range of services beneficial to them who might be facing socio-economic difficulties. The research shows that immigrant information needs are closely intertwined with several important aspect aspects of their adaptation in the US such as educational, health, employment, social, and educational.

4.3 Research Question (RQ) 2, What role do public librarians play in engaging underemployed immigrants in their daily lives to meet their information needs?

4.3.1 Librarian data analysis

Similar to the immigrant survey, I downloaded the responses of the librarian surveys as a word document. The design of this research called for both surveys to be collected at the same time. Because the focus of this research is on immigrants, the immigrants' data was the first one I worked on, as stated in the main research question (MRQ), How do libraries serve or fail to serve the information needs of immigrants with limited job skills, limited income, and limited English-speaking skills?

I read the survey responses several times and immersed myself with the answers of the respondents. As with the immigrant survey, my focus was to assemble a set of data based on the librarian's words, phrases, sentences, and narration (Jebreen, 2012). Finally, I uploaded the immigrant data to Nvivo 12 Plus and used the same process as in the immigrant survey.

The data collected from the interview and the focus group were handled the same way. With 10 interviews, the amount of data was substantial. I read all the interview transcripts several times and came up with a coding scheme. The system provided structure in the way I analyzed such a large amount of data. After uploading each interview to the software, I moved to

the next one. While I was working with the data from the interview, I was able to link the codes and saw some patterns emerging that were similar to the examination of the librarians' survey. After working with the data, I realized that, although the amount of data was larger than the immigrant survey, there was a lot of similarity in terms of the words used to describe their experiences. The examination of the data for the 10 interviews resulted in significant information I did not find in the librarian survey. At this point, I reached data saturation because no new information was uncovered in order to answer the research questions (Malterud et al., 2015). The data for research question (RQ2) yielded three categories and 9 subcategories for roles public librarians play in engaging underemployed immigrants in their daily lives to meet their information needs. Table 11 shows the categories along with their corresponding subcategories.

Table 11 Categories of roles public librarians play in engaging underemployed immigrants in their daily lives to meet their information needs

1. Librarians role is to provide access to resources
    - Providing information about employment and small business
    - Providing access to literacy programs
    - Providing access to immigration information resources
    - Supporting computer learning for immigrant patron
2. Librarians role is to provide access to families and community resources
    - Closing the digital divide
    - Providing resources for adult immigrants their teens, and their children
3. Librarians role is to provide non-tangible services
    - Offering empathetic services
    - Eagerness in providing library resources and services

4.3.2 Librarians role is to provide access to resources

4.3.2.1 Providing information about employment and small businesses

The findings suggest that librarians understand that need-based services such as information about job opportunities and business creation is one of the main reasons immigrants come to libraries. While they view learning English as critical to immigrant success, what librarians believe immigrants asked for the most varied depending on the communities. Indeed, these language learning programs have been fairly successful in immigrant neighborhoods in New York. While some librarians agree that technology classes are in demand, others stated that jobs are the next highest area of need. This analysis did not attempt to correlate the relationship between the perception of the librarians about these need-based services and their actual immigrant requests coming to their given work locations. One librarian noted that:

> *Number two, of course, job search help and information about the Library's Job and Business Academy. (IP8)*
>
> *Also, they ask for more technology classes in Spanish and computer classes that we offer in their languages so that they can find another better paying job. (IP7)*
>
> *I tell them, there are business opportunities out there for you. You can open your business and because I had my business before working at the library, I know what it is to have a small business. I go over and explain how to apply for a tax sale certificate. I direct them to go to these websites. (IP4)*

This research indicated that job readiness programs at the library is one of the programs they believe is at the core programming mission of the public library. In some of the responses, the librarians viewed their patrons' job searching skills and learning English as a second language, as two key assets that go hand in hand for adult immigrants. Job employment skills were found in the librarian interviews, focus groups, and surveys over 45 times. The job readiness programs at the three library systems involved in this study are handled by specific

units within those libraries and generally done at selected branch library locations. Those services include career advice, job listings, one-on-one job assistance, mock interviews, and resume writing.

Public service librarians are called upon to assist those patrons with job-related questions. Also, one area of job readiness for patrons that most librarians in this survey provide is assistance to immigrants with providing information needs and resources such as helping them access city exam materials. In New York City, the total workforce of the New York City government is over 396,841 (New York City Department of Citywide Administrative Services, 2017) and these jobs are very popular with immigrant communities. Many librarians in this survey stated that they view helping immigrants getting hired for these city jobs as opening a path for the immigrants to achieve the American dream.

> *There's an enormous need when you first come in the country, it's like, "Well, I gotta hit the ground running, I gotta pay for my food, right away. This can't wait." So, providing employment assistance is huge*. (FGP3)
>
> *From what we get here is job assistance, I would say, helping them with resumes, cover letters, interviews, how to do interviews. They usually come for books on civil service books, most of it is job-related.* (IP6).

Librarians see their role as providing books on finding employment. Civil service exam books are one of the most popular books sought after by immigrant communities. Regardless of how they ranked job search as important for immigrant information needs, for a segment of participants putting local job exam study guides into the hands of immigrants is vital to their success. Some of the most popular New York City jobs require some form of examination, and new hires are selected based on their scores. Many of these positions do not require citizenship, only a green card. Native-born and immigrants New Yorkers alike seek these jobs. In speaking of immigrant patrons, two participants stated that:

They are asking for books, civil service books, civil service test preparation books, and programs that help them to receive an edge. (IP2).

Our library always prints out brochures regarding jobs offered by the city. Also, we help people get OSHA [Occupational Safety and Health Administration] certified resources so that they can find work. (IP7)

4.3.2.2 Facilitating access to literacy programs

The research found that librarians see their role as providing immigrant access to literacy programs. By library literacy programs, this study refers to instructional and informational opportunities for immigrants of all ages to develop their reading, and writing abilities (Smith, 1982). The aim of the library systematic approach to literacy is to lead to greater use of the resources of the library, and to be able to provide diverse modalities of instruction that work for the learners, at a time that is convenient for learners and with an open-door policy. These literacy programs are integrating ESOL or ABE (Adult Basic Education) programs instruction with life skills, computer training, job-seeking soft skills, and library usage in a focused contextualized learning environment that is safe and learner-centered (Kong, 2011, p. 392). As such, teaching patrons to speak English is one element of adaptation. Many immigrants seek to read and write English at an advanced level. For over a century, public libraries have provided opportunities for patrons to grow their literacy skills. Immigrant patrons have also been part of the pool of adult learners at the library as more than a quarter of immigrants lack a high school diploma, or GED (Pew Research Center, 2019). While many librarians do not directly teach those classes, they support these services by helping to sign patrons up for classes, assist them in finding resources to support their learning, and answer their many questions. According to two participants:

> *I also meet older immigrants looking to take their GED high school equivalency diploma preparation test. They would at times volunteer and tell me that they want to apply for a job that requests this certification. I would direct them to the appropriate agencies (IP8).*
>
> *We tell them to go to our nearby Adult Learning Center to sign up, because they will find help, and classes, and different educational programs that will be very beneficial (IP1).*

4.3.2.3 Facilitating access to immigration information resources

Some participants viewed the role of the library as facilitating access to information resources. The data coded included responses where the librarian referred immigrants to places to file immigration papers, provided places where help is available to file citizenship forms, helped immigrants with immigration questions, and with other applications such as health forms. As librarians reflected on their experiences with immigrants at their libraries, one resource librarian stated in the interview that they are commonly asked for immigration books. Those books cover requirements both general and specific to becoming a US citizen, including the application process, requirements, and the types of questions that are expected during the interview session with the immigration officer. In partnership with the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), and NYC Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, NYC's three public libraries provide "New Americans Corners", a space that aggregates selected citizenship materials, English as a Second Language classes, referral lists of classes and services in libraries and local not for profit organizations to new immigrants. According to the Queens Library website, the aim of the service for new immigrants is to "learn your rights, the realities of the immigration process, prepare for the citizenship exam, and receive support from experienced lawyers and staff" (Queens Library). Two participants noted:

> *When they can't find what they are looking for in the 400s, they come to me, and I direct them to the citizenship books and citizenship and immigration resources* (IP5).

> *We have a number of exam preparation books for citizenship and for obtaining their green card in different languages. Some of them do ask for our citizenship programs as well. And they do their best to show up on the day of these programs also* (FGP1).

4.3.2.4 Supporting computer learning for immigrant patron

During the librarian interviews, the use by immigrants of computers and technologies in libraries was one of the core themes that emerged. Some librarians saw library technology classes from the beginner classes (e.g., computer learning workshop, introduction to the Internet) to the most advanced classes offered by libraries (e.g., coding, gaming, JavaScript) as advantageous to immigrants. They believe that those services are as critical to immigrant success as the ESOL classes.

> *Second thing, computer learning, which helps them in their job prospects and even in vocational training* (SP6).

While in some library systems, the support staff has the responsibility to teach technology classes, in others it is done by both librarians and support staff. However, the increasing sophistication and access to computer gadgets mean that teaching patrons directly at the reference desk is becoming more common. Also, with the increasingly diverse communities coming to libraries, librarians guide users to information readily available through smartphones and tablets. For those who might be technologically challenged, two participant librarians said:

> *We walk with them through the process of creating resumes that stand out, and also how to format a cover letter.* (IP9).

> *I usually teach computer classes at my library, and a large part of my students are members of the immigrant community, and they are very passionate about learning. Many times, I also answer those questions at the desk.* (IP10).

4.3.3 Librarians role is to provide access to families and community resources

4.3.3.1 Closing the digital divide

One theme that emerged during the three data collection methods is the lack of access to technology by immigrants. Some librarian participants use the term digital divide to explain this phenomenon. The participants are acutely aware that many immigrants come to the library because they cannot afford Internet access or a printer. Although some immigrant communities are computer savvy, and proficient with ICT (information and communications technology), some do not have the information skills:

> *The main issue, digital divide, most people, they are staying home, they have only one laptop, so the kids are going to the school, they are attending school from home, so he cannot, or she cannot use the laptop for the programming or join the meeting.* (SP12)
>
> *The second issue, they do not have an Internet connection, like broadband or something. So, they're having issues, it's not like a job.* (IP6)

Five participants shared their views regarding the opportunity the shutdown offered for greater librarian engagement to the immigrant community. Although I did not discuss whether this service will continue post-pandemic because it might not be up to the frontline public librarian, one librarian hoped that more can use the online opportunities public libraries have been offering:

> *We also provide chat and other online services to the immigrant community; I just hope that more immigrants know about this service* (IP2).

During the pandemic, librarians were hard at work conducting online programs. Many attempted to find a way to reach out to communities they would normally see at their public libraries. These librarians both improvised and used existing outreach mechanisms. This outreach was done both to the community at large, and immigrant community leaders:

> *For example, I had a virtual program geared toward the immigrant community. This program is an important part of our online outreach, and I strive to provide quality programs both to immigrants and native speakers alike.* (IP5)
>
> *Make all advertising multi-lingual (which we already do to some extent) and perhaps work directly with immigrant customers to understand how best to promote our services (such as what mediums to use) and which areas are most in need of them (FGP2).*
>
> *Recently we have been doing an email blast. But at first, when the pandemic hit and the shutdown started, I collected some of my contacts' information that I have on an Excel sheet, put them together so we can connect with them because of our work, the outreach process is different.* (SP8)
>
> *We can survey our patrons, we send mail to the people, I mean, to the parents, and inform them that we have computer classes and tell them like, "Hey, we're doing these classes, would you be interested? So that is the way we can reach out to the people, like by emailing them for those who have some technology skills, and mailing because you need to understand the digital divide for the immigrant community.* (IP3)

4.3.3.2 Providing resources for adult immigrants their teens, and their children

Services across a generation of immigrant families were one of the themes that emerged. Some participants who see more young patrons at their libraries reflected that library services also involve helping several generations of immigrant patrons. They see these programs as beneficial both for the parent learning English and for the child who is immersed in the new culture. Participant 10 saw this as an opportunity instead of a hindrance because it allows the library to reach a wider audience:

> *The most needed thing is we have to think of library service for adults, teens, and kids… So, we need to think about three different levels of service. […] When the immigrants come to this country, they don't come alone, they bring their families. Later, they also bring older adults, like grandparents. (IP10)*

This research highlights the importance librarians give to programs for immigrant children. Librarian participants who spend a large part of their days interacting with immigrant

parents and their children consider youth programs as a critical part of their services to these library patrons. Although formal children's education is the authority of local school districts, many libraries provide a wide variety of programs from bilingual storytime to literacy programs and STEM workshops for school-age youth that support their traditional instructions in the classroom. Librarians who usually have the pulse of what is going on in the community can adapt these programs to their neighborhood patrons. In neighborhoods with a high concentration of a specific immigrant group, these programs encourage the direct involvement of immigrant parents in these sessions, a situation they might not have been able to do inside the school. Two librarian participants shared that these interactions across several generations in a family are important:

> *Immigrants want programs, all sorts of programs, especially programs for their children. They really want story time; they want arts and crafts. They ask us for insights on the [US] education system and any programs that will help their children to learn* (FGP3).

> *I have noticed that immigrant parents are very involved. I mean, they bring their children to the library quite a lot. They encourage their children to attend any children's programs, or kids' book reading programs...They want their children to have different kinds of life, an education, and a life they never had* (IP4).

4.3.4 Librarians role is to provide non-tangible services

4.3.4.1 Offering empathetic services

A total of eight participants shared the view that along with providing resources to newcomers comes the need for empathy. According to Phillips (2016), professional empathy "helps combat social exclusion, improve community librarianship, and connect with patrons" (p. 32). Empathetic services revolve around the idea that one of the librarian's roles is to provide

social, emotional, and psychological support to patrons in need. It is an essential aspect of librarianship with the level that librarians provide to communities using their information literacy skills, and information access knowledge (Phillips, (2017). They understood that when an immigrant feels respected and treated well it leads to a successful reference interview. Participant two stated:

> *I think, first of all, you have to be patient with immigrant patrons, and you have to make them feel that you want to help them* (FGP2).

> *I try to be welcoming and compassionate* (IP1).

A few participants suggested that by smiling when newcomers approach them, they feel less intimidated by the library experience because it is universally understood as a sign of welcoming:

> *First of all, I smile. And because many immigrants, who don't speak English very well feel shy or nervous. So, we have to welcome with a smile and by saying hello* (FGP4).

> *My personal experience, give the biggest smile, be receptive to their needs, of course, and giving the service when we learn their names.* (IP9).

Many librarians see their job as a noble one, and regard public libraries as sanctuary places (Ettarh, 2018). Participant three evoked this in alluding to his public service mantra when dealing with immigrant patrons at his public library:

> *And then treat them like when you are a customer, how would you like to be treated? So, treat them that way so do the conversation and then the customer service improved* (IP3).

For some participants who work at a small community library, immigrants respond positively to the librarian's warm welcome. Although it is human nature to respond to such overture, the

participant believes that immigrants in these communities have a sense that public librarians are there to help them. When starting the day with a positive attitude, the librarians reflected:

> *When I unlock the door library. There's a crowd waving. So, I hold that door open and I say hello to every person coming in and in whatever language they want to speak to me, and I say "Hey," so yeah, we greet everybody.* (IP10)

> *Everybody is coming in and air kisses and hugs and heaven only knows when we're going to be able to do that again.* (IP6)

In community settings, some librarians go above and beyond the call of duty. Interacting regularly with immigrant families means, for some librarians, they know personal details of these families such as their names, birthdays, and even their living arrangements. One librarian said of her experience:

> *I know one time, one of our kids was having a birthday she was turning six. And one of our librarians overheard her mom saying that she was not trying to make a big deal out of it because she was not going to have anything really to give her for her birthday and our librarian went out to make a small surprise party for the kid at the library and gave her a goody bag.* (IP8)

Participant 4 shared further that it is not enough to give the resources to immigrant patrons. She framed her service as providing some words of encouragement while giving them the vital information:

> *Most of the new immigrants I come in contact to do not know they can apply for federal student aid. And actually, I referred them to the financial aid office at those colleges after talking with them. And they say in my country I was doing accounting, then I refer them to places that can examine their credentials and other institution where they may find financial support. I give them words of encouragement. I tell them don't be afraid, they will help you, they will work it out with you. (IP*4)

4.3.4.2 Eagerness in providing library resources and services

One of the first themes that emerged from this research is the overwhelming sense from the librarians that they have this pressing desire to provide resources to immigrant populations. Librarians have a very positive attitude toward helping immigrant patron. The practice of librarians interacting with immigrant patrons at the library happens through the delivery of programs and services both inside and outside of the library. The librarian participants' perception is that their encounters with immigrants are almost always positive. As professionals, they rely on their training to provide the needed resources which often consists of providing resources, classes, programs, referrals to enrich immigrant life in their new environments and provide lifelong opportunities. This eagerness is palpable when talking with librarians during the interviews, and focus group. Two librarian survey participants noted:

> *Before the pandemic, while working in the children's department, I would help new immigrants find books for their children and recommend programs to them. For example, I encourage Kindergarten parents to read with their children, and for every 100 books read, they receive a free book. (SP12)*

> *I provide a range of ways in my service to immigrant such as bringing them physically to the areas of the library with information (Citizenship Corner) or collections (Foreign Language collections). In addition, I refer them to outside city agencies that provide services helpful to their needs, and then asking them follow-up questions. (SP 19)*

Although participant observation was not part of data collection, with the manner in which the librarian participants responded, I was able to gauge that during the virtual interviews, and the focus group, the librarians felt strongly about providing service to immigrant patrons. One very enthusiastic participant stated:

> *I provide service in three different languages, I set up computer classes in Spanish, provide technology classes in Bengali, and run a Chinese technology classes. These classes are coordinated three times a week Mondays, Thursdays and Saturdays…So it's a huge project from me. We have these services to help immigrants. We have a vital role to play in the community but this my project. We partner with the community organization.*

> *We partnered with USCIS we have a very successful classes, every classes have 25 to 30 students, once a week. Now we are doing three times a week.* (IP1)

Of course, librarians believe that the programs and services they provide meet the information needs of immigrants (Table 12, Table 13). During the course of the verbal data collection, there were instances where the tones, and mannerism gave clues that librarians are passionate to provide those services. Their excitement came up when describing immigrants' delight when finding a critical piece of information or a resource. This eagerness was also observed when suggesting improvement in service delivery of the library, and when indicating services, they believed were most beneficial services for immigrants. Librarians speak of their pleasure when doing outreach, and how surprised patron seemed to be when meeting library staff providing resources outside of the library building. They indicated their enthusiasm in providing suitable and targeted outreach, opening library cards, offering referrals to NYC social services, and translation services, and the library being a cultural center to meet other immigrants. Lastly, they were generally proud that the library is one of the recommended place in the neighborhood to learn English or improve their language skills or conduct programs that facilitate immigrants' new lives in America. One participant noted:

> *The most they ask for English learning programs and books* (IP2).

Another participant agreed:

> *The most they asked for ESL classes because I think learning English for them, I think it is one of the most important aspects of becoming an American citizen* (IP4).

Participant 1 listed ESOL classes as one component in demand with immigrant communities in the US:

> *We offer many services for the community but then there's also another public service that we provide like ESL classes.* (SP1)

Some of the interviewees agreed that in a multilingual city such as New York an immigrant can get by, success will depend on learning and mastering English:

> *The first thing you need to understand is that English is the language, they need to learn and then computer.* (IP8)

They understood that the popularity of these classes is one of the primary reasons immigrants come to the public libraries:

> *English language proficiency classes are what immigrants ask for the most in my library, we have a huge demand. (IP3)*

Table 12 Do you believe these programs meet the information needs of immigrant patrons?

Answer	Percentage	Number
Yes	81.82%	18
No	9.09%	2
Did not Answer	9.09%	2
Total		22

Table 13 Do these services meet the information needs of immigrant patrons?

Answer	Percentage	Number
Yes	90.91%	20
No	9.09%	2
Total	100%	22

4.3.5 Summary

Public librarian role may be grouped into three categories that are critical in helping underemployed and marginalized populations cope with different forms of assistance both onsite and online. Public librarians see themselves proving the following core service: to provide

access to resources, to provide access for families and community resources, and to provide non-tangible services. Along those categories emerged eight subcategories. They are providing information about employment and small business, providing access to literacy programs, providing access to immigration information resources and supporting computer learning for immigrant patron. Because of the librarian's unique experience in providing reference interviews and searching for targeted information and their familiarity with government services, public library staff are well-placed to serve their patrons. Public libraries still represent one of the last few places where any immigrants who come through its door can freely access information. The responses of the librarians indicated that providing ESOL instruction, job assistance, and computer access are some of the critical ways immigrants can find help. In the data collection, the public librarians indicated that such services are fundamental in immigrant adaptation.

4.4 Research Question (RQ) 3, What are the challenges public librarians face in providing services to underemployed immigrants with limited English-speaking skills?

Just as was indicated for research question (RQ2), the data for the librarian survey, interview, and focus group were used to make a thorough assessment to find the link between perceptions of library service to immigrants and the challenges public librarians face in providing services to underemployed immigrants with limited English-speaking skills. Working with the data to answer both the previous research question (RQ2) and this question. I used both manual and computer-assisted coding to produce a rich data analysis in the identification of new themes and emerging patterns. The research question (RQ) 3, yielded 3 categories, and seven subcategories as shown in the table below.

Table 14 Categories of challenges public librarians face in providing services to underemployed immigrants with limited English-speaking skills.

1. Institutional barriers
    - Staffing shortage
    - Budget cuts
    - Staff training
2. Professional barriers
    - Issues with librarian role as technology access trainer
    - Librarian outreach to immigrant
3. Personal barriers
    - Unfamiliarity with Immigrant culture
    - Immigrant perception of library services

4.4.1 Institutional Barriers

4.4.1.1 Staffing shortage

The study revealed that a staffing shortage is one of the big issues for public librarians, irrespective of the role at the public library (Table 15). For example, there were some instances I coded in which the librarians spoke of more support staff than librarian on the public floor, no bilingual adult service staff, not enough diverse staff, no front desk to great immigrant when they come to libraries in library and having to do more with less in general. They consider that these limitations led to barriers in their services. When asked to identify challenges to the use and provision of services to immigrant populations at their libraries, librarians spoke of barriers that were specific to their libraries and/or systems.

The perception that there is an issue of inadequate staffing affects librarians working at multiple levels of their organizations. The public-facing librarians who participated in this research had the following roles:

Table 15 What is your role in the library?

Reference Librarian
Children's Librarian
Customer Service librarian
Children's Librarian
Assistant Manager
Senior librarian
Program Librarian
General librarian
Assistant Community Library Manager
Adult Librarian
Librarian
Upper-level management librarian

A few librarian participants with supervisory roles brought up their difficulties, noting they did not always have enough staff to provide services to immigrants. They don't always have control over staffing which in many instances are the domains of library administrators. That means the resources presented at the branch level to an immigrant visiting a local library are less than what the library is capable of offering.

As stated above, the participant studies show that the perception of staff shortage is seen by librarians who work across their different roles in their organization and irrespective of how long they have been working in their positions (Figure 14). Frontline librarians will be the first ones to feel this perceived staffing inadequacy. Considering that librarians are essential to

immigrant users to be able to access materials, their shrinking presence affects services. As a result, the significant resources public libraries put toward immigrant services might not have been fully realized by members of those communities. When a habitual immigrant user accesses a library with a staffing shortage, it causes a ripple effect to the services. This impacts the immigrant perception of that library in that they might think that those services are not available. Some libraries with planned activities that would be beneficial to these underserved patrons might not be able to provide it because of those limitations.

> *With limited staff and budgets, we are forced to provide basic library services we believe will be useful to the immigrant communities. We partnered and focused on the local nonprofit agencies and community advocates to promote them to the new arrivals when they come in. Also, with the help of receiving private grants, we expand outreach and collections where they are needed.* (FGP4)

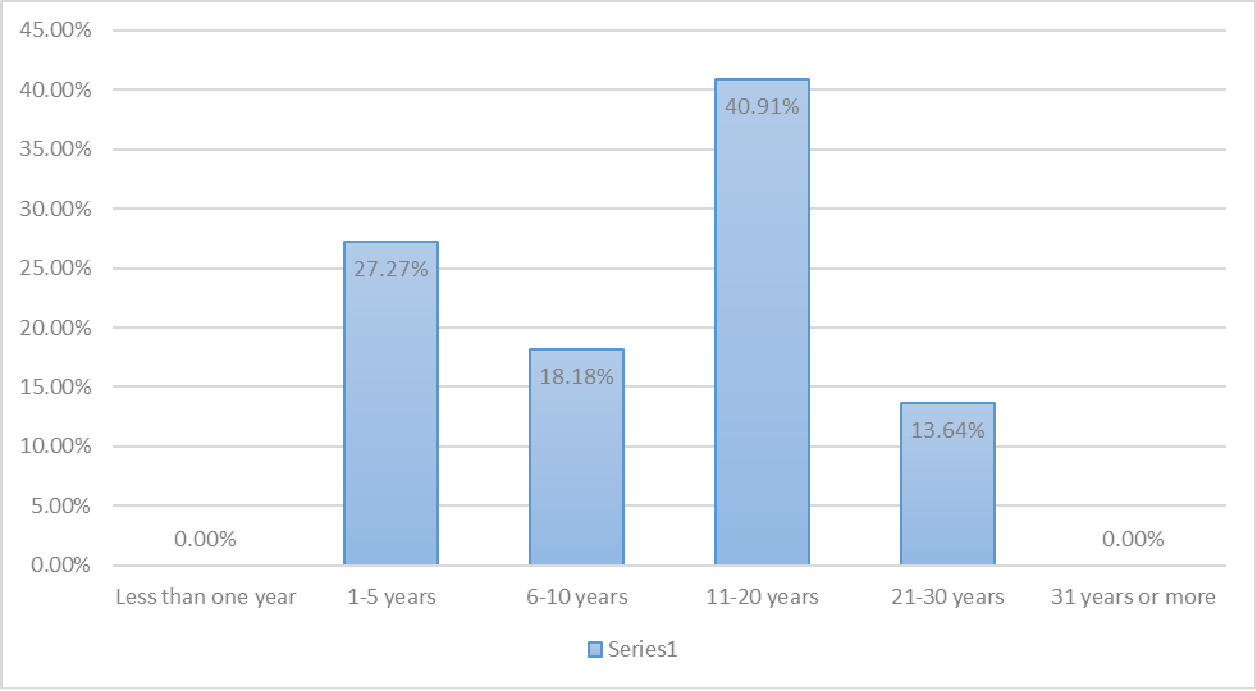

Figure 14 How long have you worked at this library?

4.4.1.2 Budget cuts

The study reveals that not all public libraries with staffing issues tended to have a wider budget problem. Two librarians in this research mentioned the role that the service hours play in immigrants coming to the library. It's a basic fact that if those libraries are not open when immigrants are available, then they cannot use those on-site resources. Libraries with a smaller budget are open fewer hours. This might have a ripple effect of causing the community library personnel to burn out because staff members have to work harder to provide services. Librarians in public supervisory roles mentioned that public librarians' staff shortages and high staff turnover means that they have to constantly train librarians. Budget issues may affect new staff more because they may struggle as they are new to providing services to the local immigrant patrons and may not have a dearth of training in dealing with diverse populations, and/or a have need for more professional knowledge and library expertise in serving the specific need of the immigrant communities.

Library staff shortages and stagnant budgets were identified also by several frontline librarians as a key factor affecting immigrant patron access to services. In the New York City metropolitan area, many neighborhoods with high concentrations of immigrants have small libraries with a few staff as compared to the larger libraries in other parts of the city. This uneven distribution of library professionals across the communities is identified as one element contributing to barriers affecting immigrant services. In some neighborhood libraries, some librarians stated that immigrants identify people working in libraries as librarians when in fact they are support staff. Support staff may lack the level of training, professional knowledge, like conducting a reference interview, and the skills and professional expertise librarians receive

through on-location job training and in their graduate programs. This inadequate preparation of support staff and lack of professional librarians may lead to negative interactions with patrons.

> *These services do meet the immigrant's needs, but because of budget cuts, there is more demand than the library can handle. We created the expectation that we can help, and then we let it drop; cuts in programs for immigrants seem to hurt them the most, especially for English language learning programs.* (SP17)

Budget issues affect resource allocation. When library administration has to consider which areas to cut, they faced the difficult decision to prioritize which areas to cut. Along with staffing cuts, materials, programming, and digital resources are sometimes considered. More often than not, the services less utilized are cut first. However, a lack of utilization might not necessarily mean there was a lack of interest considering the staffing resources mentioned above. As stated by one librarian:

> *Currently, we are giving what is being asked for but unfortunately, we dropped our language database due to cost vs usage. Our agencies did like to use this but now we look to any free apps or websites. (SP14)*

4.4.1.3 Staff training

The study discovered that staff training is one of the big issues they have in dealing with multicultural populations. Although 68 percent of librarians indicated that they receive enough training in the survey, two librarians in the interviews indicated that they saw a need for more in-house training and teaching in library schools in dealing with multicultural and immigrant populations. By staff training, I mean an ongoing process to plan staff development to better serve patrons (Novicki, 2017). Staff training involves a particular public service at all levels of the organization in order to meet expectations of users. This study did not attempt to find out what different areas of training were needed because it was outside of the scope of this research, but to note the extend of the training.

Need for more training on how and what is the way that we handle the immigrants' informational needs and help. (FGP3)

The kind of experience you get coming out from school is theoretical that you actually have to learn on the job. And I think as the country becomes more diverse, library schools would probably need to change their curriculum a little bit and try to do classes that are more practical, like how to work with diverse populations. (FGP2)

Table 16 Have you received any training in or outside of your library system in working with immigrant patrons?

Answer	Percentage	Number
Yes	68.18%	15
No	27.27%	6
Did not Answer	5%	1
Total	100%	22

Also, the study discovered that there is no consistent way in which librarians handled patrons with language difficulties. There was no training or procedures in those instances in place as each case is different. While a librarian may look for a staff member who can speak and understand the patron, another will try to use an app, or an accompanying person. This may lead to unintended disclosure of personal information on the public library floor. An interview participant stated that:

Sometimes, if there's a language barrier, I try and find somebody who can speak the language. When I do find someone who can, we speak through a third person…I can talk to them and have somebody translate. If I can't do that, then there's Google Translate, but I would prefer using a person to translate I trust that a little bit more. I just try my and make them feel welcome. (IP3)

4.4.2 Professional Barriers

4.4.2.1 Issues with librarian role as technology access trainer

Immigrants' use of computers and technologies in the library and the difficulties encountered in helping them was one of the main themes found in the librarian responses. The librarians in this research were aware that one of the main attractions at the library were the public computers, printers, and free public Wi-Fi. They were not sure that immigrant patrons were taking enough advantage of these ICT opportunities. The librarian's role in giving patrons instructions on using the Internet and other technology has been an accepted part of the job for many years. These librarians were providing instructions on the main public floor, at the reference desk by going over the search with their patrons, some of whom were using their cell phones, over the phone assisting patrons navigating the public libraries web pages, and in a computer classroom inside larger library branches. A combination of limited English language skills and limited technology skills made it difficult for some librarians to be able to provide sufficient assistance. The librarians indicated that some of the technology classes are taught in languages other than English, depending on the language of the immigrant communities that live in the area. While many public librarians reported that when they don't teach the classes themselves, some librarians indicated that they work with community providers who speak the immigrant community languages and have expertise in the subject.

> *One big issue and a very important aspect in serving immigrant communities is technology. Teaching those skills and giving them access to the Internet and helping them learn different skills on the computer, like, how to browse the Internet, how-to, you know, type something in Word, things like that help with technology but it is very challenging to do so we try to have some computer classes in other languages to help them.* (IP6)

> *I teach computer classes at the library, and a large part of my students are members of the immigrant community, and they are very passionate about learning computers. I am more successful teaching them in our[computer] lab as opposed to the [reference] desk because it is always busy there. With the language barriers, they need more time from me, and I try my best to help them. I think that's one of the major services I provided, and I have a passion doing is providing computer classes to the immigrant community. They are very passionate in terms of learning computers, Word, Excel, learning to search the Internet. So, in addition to working at the reference desk, being able to teach computer classes to that community, particular is I see is a very important part of my job*. (IP2)

Many immigrant patrons are very technologically savvy, but a large number are not. For those immigrants who are not technologically savvy and come to the reference desk for help with or without their smartphone, tablets, or laptops to access information, the study discovered that it was challenging to provide technological instructions ad-lib at the desk while delivering access to online information to those individual immigrants. The needs of those patrons were at times an informational need, technological need, or a combination of both. The librarian participants stated those patrons were often referred to the computer terminal areas for technological help. Those sections are often managed by non-librarians who might not be trained in reference interviews.

4.4.2.2 Librarian outreach to immigrant

The research indicates that librarians believe that library engagement efforts are not there yet in attracting more immigrants. As engagement and outreach teams are becoming the norms in more public library organizations, the research shows that competing for limited resources in libraries might generate unintended barriers as librarians devote time both in and out of the library locations without more added staff. Also, the data from the immigrant survey indicated that they learn of public library services from the traditional way —by word of mouth. As public

libraries focus more on digital medium and social media to inform the public about its resources, the research shows that immigrant users and services are learning about library services from one and other, not primarily through the libraries. The success of library outreach might still be somewhat limited.

Librarians see their role as providing the service inside their library building. During the immigrants' survey, it was discovered that outreach visits from a librarian or library staff are very limited. This seemed to indicate that fewer efforts are provided on outside outreach. Some librarians seemed to regard outreach as some extra duties, and not part of their core role as public librarians.

> *Language, of course, but also outreach to let them know what services we provide. Perhaps a welcome program that will spell out what we can do for them. (SP19)*
>
> *Not having sufficient outreach and marketing staff. I believe we should be creating flyers that can be distributed to places where high populations of immigrants spend time, such as places of worship, laundromats, supermarkets, etc. This would especially be helpful in reaching single immigrant women who might not otherwise learn about our services. (IP14)*

Some librarians in the study mentioned that the difference in language and culture does affect how patrons interact with them at the library. The language was seen by many participants as a barrier to library access since the librarians working in immigrant communities might not necessarily speak the immigrant languages. The resulting communication challenges were found to have a negative impact on their interaction, and the extent of the services provided to these groups. One librarian noted that she has found some ways to communicate with her immigrant patrons:

> *I have found a lot of the times that the people who are coming to get help from you, even if they don't speak the language, they're very patient with you. And what I do as a kind of a workaround, is I use Google Translate. I am not always successful with that option but that is the one that was somewhat useful.* (IP2)

> *The language barrier is one of the biggest challenges. Many times, immigrants are unable to express themselves clearly in English and many of the staff members are not versed in many of the languages spoken by immigrants.* (SP11)
>
> *There is not sufficient staff who speak a variety of languages spoken by the immigrants in the community, there is also the issue of staffing in some of the services most used by immigrants. (SP18)*

Librarians acknowledged that immigrant populations may view them negatively during the reference interview sessions as they often ask patrons to repeat their questions when their accents are not well understood. This unhelpful perception might also be due to the intrusiveness and the interrogatory aspect of the reference interview. The librarian's solution is often to speak slowly and raise their voices. Librarians understood that some non-English Speaking patrons' inability to make themselves understood and thus to locate reference information useful to their need will use of the libraries less.

This research discovered that a number of librarians speak a language other than English with different degrees of fluency. Although I did not try to establish in this research how many librarians were from a non-English speaking country (some native-born librarians are also bilinguals) and thus provide an asset to libraries for patrons who spoke another language, I found that many librarians in New York are bilingual. During the interviews, while some native-born librarians indicated that they understand Spanish, one language with a high number of immigrants in New York City, others indicated they can speak Spanish with limited proficiency providing directional answers, and not enough to be useful to patrons in their reference interviews. When asked, "do you speak another language besides English?", 40.91% said yes, but 59.09% said no (Table 17, and Table 18).

Table 17 Do you speak another language besides English?

Answer	Percentage	Number
Yes	40.91%	9
No	59.09%	13
Total	100%	22

Table 18 Languages spoken by librarians

Spanish
Portuguese
Japanese
French
Chinese
Hindi
Tamil
Bengali
Hindi
Urdu
Polish

Librarians stated that their libraries do not always have multicultural staff who speak the language of the communities (although those staff may be working at a nearby local library). Because of legal aspects of local union agreements with the library organizations, librarians who speak a language other than English are not automatically assigned a library servicing that community. This means that the recruitment of multicultural qualified librarians is tricky as they may not always be placed in communities where they are most needed. Some librarians reported that when they have moved to medium and large cities, they realized how different life was from

their home communities. According to the librarian participants, staff shortages impacted the quality of services provided:

> *Some immigrants have to work insanely crazy hours because they have to take care of their families. So, when they have a chance to come to the library, and they see that no one can understand them, or provide assistance to them, sometimes they stop coming.* (IP7)

Staffing issues have led to higher burnout amongst library professionals, increased stress because of the augmented workload, longer lines at the reference desks, and less time to focus on immigrants' information questions.

4.4.3 Personal barriers

4.4.3.1 Unfamiliarity with immigrant culture

Librarian participants mentioned facing cultural challenges in their interaction with immigrant populations. One immigrant participant indicated that getting too close to a patron while showing them a resource would lead them to back off when approached. In some communities, information requests were made directly by the library patron, while in other communities, the male patron was generally used as a spokesperson for the group. One participant pointed to several occasions where he received requests from patrons who wished to speak specifically with him because he is a male librarian. In those situations, he explained that such requests cannot be fulfilled because public library policy forbids selecting librarians for the delivery of public service based on gender. In those instances, these cultural barriers created obstacles to library access for immigrant populations.

> *One of the biggest issues I faced is dealing with some male patrons from some cultures who do not want to speak to a woman.* (IP3)

During the interviews sessions and the focus group, there were instances where the librarians spoke of immigrant communities as "another" culture or as being "unfamiliar." In those instances, some librarians recommended that librarians graduating from library schools receive training in multicultural etiquette or the know how to conduct programs to understand different ethnic communities, and the need to seek information about types of local immigrants coming to their library. In those instances, I coded those passages where in speaking of immigrants, the services or international resources, librarian participants alluded to the idea of "otherness", "foreigners", and "not from here". In speaking of the need of staff to know their customers' base, one librarian noted:

> *Maybe the population they interact with in the library or in that neighborhood, is from a particular country, but from a particular group within that country. So maybe the group they interact with is very well educated. So, when they come to the library, they just assume that "Okay, people from X country, they're all illiterate. They're all this, they're all that." Without realizing that, no, this says you have so many different kinds of people in the United States, you have scientists and doctors, a population that's not restricted to this one group. (FGP 5)*

4.4.3.2 Immigrant perception of library services

Librarian participants believe that some immigrant communities might not have a full picture of what public libraries are all about and think new immigrants are not familiar with modern American library services. I coded the following instances in the data where librarians described immigrants feeling: "overwhelmed in understanding the library system", "need welcoming attitude of library staff to continue", and librarians view that immigrants exhibit some "negative perspective regarding libraries". These participants think that an immigrant might know there are libraries within a walking distance of their home and that they can come to a library, but immigrants might know how much such service or what kind of service they can

access to or what the library can offer for them. This is because the range of resources and services that public libraries have and can provide in the US is not the same as it is in their native country. So, when people come here, they might come to the library simply for a book. They may never come to the library because they think it is just for books, (and maybe ESOL classes) They think that they don't need books, but then they walk in, they might feel overwhelmed by the number of resources: immigration assistance, coping skills workshops, naturalizations test preparation, and computer training assistance. The full capacity of the library is an enigma for a significant number of those patrons. During the interview, one participant noted:

> *I think coming in for the first time, it can be a bit overwhelming, and there is a natural apprehension because it's huge. There are so many services, there are so many desks, they may not know the language well and the countries that they come from, the library system there is either nonexistent or exist at a very limited level. So, they may have books and someone's sitting there, and you borrow books. That's about it. I feel it can be overwhelming. But coming here to slowly learn about library services, I think, it becomes eye opening experience because there's so much available that make use of.* (IP6)

4.4.8 Summary

The findings from research question three (RQ3) reveals that public librarians face different challenges in serving immigrants customers that may lead to the underutilization of library services. Three categories of barriers or challenges emerged. They are institutional, professional, and personal. When looking closely at the data, I found that specifically librarians faced difficulties dealing with staffing shortages, budget cuts, staff training, issues with the librarian role as technology access trainer, librarian outreach to immigrant, unfamiliarity with immigrant culture and immigrant perception of library services. Although the goal of many public libraries is to provide an inclusive atmosphere for their immigrant patrons, librarian participants believe that as a result of the challenges in their libraries, not all immigrant users are

benefiting from the library resources available to them. Many libraries have had to manage with fewer resources while trying to provide more services to an increasingly diverse group of patrons. Librarian participants were concerned that a combination of fewer librarians on the public floor, cultural and language barriers and immigrant perception of library services create barriers in servicing these populations.

4.5 Chapter conclusion

The findings in this chapter addressed the three research questions. Before doing so, I depicted the difficulty encountered as a result of the pandemic. While the initial qualitative study relied on collecting data mostly face to face and in the areas, participants patronize, I changed the collection of data entirely online in light of COVID-19. Two sets of data were generated: the first data set came from the online immigrant surveys, and the second data set was from the librarian participants in the surveys, interviews, and focus groups. I used manual analysis and Nvivo 12 for my data analysis in my coding process. The generated themes arose from a repeated process in which sets of data were analyzed, merged, compared, further revised, and grouped into categories.

The findings revealed that public librarians play a vital role in engaging underemployed immigrants in their daily lives to meet their information needs. Librarians play a desirable role in helping immigrants. They provide information about job openings and small business resource access, employment opportunity, and literacy access. Other services provided were civil services exams preparation, citizenship classes, resources for adults, teens, and kids, computer learning, and empathetic services.

Librarians face many challenges in providing services to underemployed immigrants with limited English-speaking skills. Internally, there were many work-related constraints, such as staff shortage and training. The study discovered that librarians believed they needed also to overcome external barriers such as immigrant language issues and cultural barriers in providing better services. Finally, the public perceptions of what their job should be, and their dual role as technology access trainers pose another challenge in their services to populations of immigrants.

In chapter 5, the significant themes that were uncovered will be discussed in more detail.

Chapter 5 Discussion

5.1 Introduction

The objective of this exploratory qualitative case study design is to seek to understand immigrants' everyday information experiences and their participation (or lack of) in public library services. I briefly summarized the research that includes the problem at hand, the significance of the study, and reviewed the methods I have used so far. I examined each research question (RQ1), (RQ2), (RQ3), in light of the main research questions (MRQ). I discussed and presented some recommendations that include factors affecting the newcomer's information need and the application of strategies for a more improve library service experience for immigrants. I articulated the implications of this study, as well as its strength and its weakness. The overarching research question (MRQ) as defined in Section 1.7:

How do libraries serve or fail to serve the information needs of immigrants with limited job skills, limited income, and limited English-speaking skills?

The following sections examine the results and their implications for each research questions in light of the themes developed in the previous chapter.

5.2 Relevant library services

The findings of Research Questions 1, (RQ 1) examined the extent to which immigrants are (or are not) taking advantage of the full services public libraries offer, and why some immigrants are not aware of them. The resulting open coding approach yielded different categories stated in the previous chapter. These can be summarized into four types of opportunities: general access opportunities, literary-related opportunities, immigration-related opportunities, and community life-integrated opportunities.

Immigrants, in general, come to the US looking for opportunities, and to be successful, whether or not it's called the American dream. Non-English speaking immigrants understand that they need new tools to achieve their goals. Those achievements means finding good jobs, educations, skills, financial stability and so forth. Having greater options starts with getting access to information that leads to those objectives. Traditionally, immigrant communities rely on their own personal networks and immigrants who preceded them for information access. Depending on how they access credible information, they will go online or possibly to a public library. It's easy to say that if they never accessed public libraries in their home countries, then they will likely not do so here.

Burke (2008) reported that there might be a correlation between library use by different immigrant groups and countries of origin. This study has shown that the reality might be a bit more complex. This dissertation follows a social constructivist lens to understand people's information experience. This view looked at the human activity in terms of their interconnectivity to their environment. This first question delves into the different types of information behavior exhibited by immigrants in seeking and using information in different contexts (Pettigrew et al., 2001). Those different kinds of information behaviors are also very much about their different categories of information need. LIS scholars contended that the everyday choices people (such as immigrants) made in their quests for information need is not accidental but is related to their backgrounds and environments. Dervin's (1999), sense-making approach, Chatman's (1985, 1996, 1999), theory of information poverty, theory of life in the round, and the theory of normative behavior, and Savolainen's (1995), everyday life information seeking (ELIS) follow this line and provide a better understanding of the information experience of immigrants. In the same way, the finding shows that immigrants face an extraordinary

information gap when they come to the US. In order to bridge this gap, they seek information from close family members, friends, the Internet, and public libraries. The first step is the desire of immigrants to know that their need for accessibility is critical to their information experience. This is similar to Dervin and Nilan (1986) who argued that humans have a need to reduce anxiety and insecurity in order to fill their information gap. Immigrants sees library services as filling this gap.

Also, the context of non-English speaking immigrants, the focus of this research, put them at risk to miss out on crucial information as they are prone to be insular and look to their own socio-linguistic communities in seeking information. This research found that some participants do not go to libraries because they believe that public libraries cannot provide them with the information they need, and that they carry some uncertainty regarding their information needs and libraries. In the same vein, Chatman's studies (1996, 2000) into the information practice of vulnerable populations found that her participants had a reluctance to cross boundaries to seek information and prefer to live within the norms of their "small world".

By looking at the motivation of immigrants in seeking information, I can postulate that there is a dimension of Savolainen's ELIS theory in the way immigrants portrayed their information need. Savolainen's ELIS comprises a social context in which the substantive choices people make every day are impacted by their perception of the way things are or "way of life". The way people keep their life in order has a cognitive-affective element, and an optimistic-pessimistic aspect that influences the practical choices individual make every day. At the same time, the specific desires of immigrants for library services, and what specific services they are asking for, without them saying it directly, points to the multiple barriers they confront. Those barriers according to Savolainen (2016) are: "socio-cultural barriers: barriers due to language

problems, barriers related to social stigma and cultural taboo, small-world related barriers, institutional barriers, organizational barriers, and barriers due to the lack of social and economic capital" (p. 52).

The notion that immigrants recognize libraries as one of the best credible sources of information to fulfil their information need is found abundantly in LIS literature. While there are significant theories that conceptually explained what motivates a person in their research for information, there are other practical frameworks that have guided LIS scholars that are found in this research. The need of immigrants is not purely about information for information's sake, and the services that public libraries offer are not only about information needs. Unfortunately, the LIS literature has not always understood that public librarians' transactions with patrons are not always informational in nature (Latham & Lenstra, 2020).

5.2.1 General access opportunities

The findings in my dissertation show immigrants desire library services to access information. This is in line with LIS research that demonstrates a range of tangible reasons immigrants seek library services. One of the main reasons is their desire for information and communications technology (ICT) services. My findings are similar with LIS scholars who have widely reported the impact of the digital divide on the information experience of users (Diaz Andrade & Doolin, 2019; Audunson et al., 2011; Jaeger et al., 2012; Gasser & Palfrey, 2008; Lin & Boamah, 2019; Taylor et al., 2014). Certainly, public libraries have made considerable investment in those areas. Those services include access to computer workstations, laptops for in-house use and to check out, Wi-Fi access inside the library facilities and Wi-Fi lending devices for students. As a case in point, NYC's three library systems reported 12409 computers for public use spread over 200 community libraries (De Blasio et al., 2019). This number is

significant but by no means enough as the more computers made available, the more users come to the libraries. Library systems aim to provide technology access both to disconnected users and users looking for more technological services. In NYC that includes immigrants which account for 3.1 million individuals and comprise nearly 38% of the city population (Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, 2018). What my research found is that library services are relevant for immigrants for its practicality. Most new immigrants are pragmatic and look for opportunities. If public libraries were to thrive, it would need to consider such needs.

My analysis of the immigrants' data pointed to their desire for multicultural programs and services. One of the goals of the American Library Association (ALA) is equitable access to information and library services for everyone. ALA promotes "access to information for all" (American Library Association, 2019). The organization guidelines encourage public libraries to take a social stance for serving their diverse population. Some scholars believe that the responsibilities of public libraries are changing as they are more than rooms full of books but also spaces for community information and interaction (Caidi et al., 2008; Caidi & Allard, 2005; Khoir et al., 2015). As a result, they argued that libraries should promote social inclusivity through their programing. Immigrant participants in this research seemed to agree. Because public libraries are instructional places, it is important to focus on the style of learning of different immigrant group and their diverse knowledge system in relation to users of the libraries. A common conclusion in LIS research is that public libraries need multicultural programs and services is to promote adaptation and to reduce insufficient language proficiency. However, the fact that immigrants in this research were generally proficient with their languages skills and still desired those services meant that having those programs promotes a culture both

of inclusivity, which encourages an atmosphere of equity and promotes their cultural heritage, thus encouraging them to come to the library and enjoy their services.

Many libraries provide several services to the new immigrants in their communities such as multicultural collections which serve at least two purposes. First, they help non-English speaking immigrants to read in a language they know. This is in line with Savolainen (2016) who argued that the lack of printed books is due to institutional barriers which compounds immigrants' language barriers. Second, an international and culturally diverse print collection encourages diversity. Multicultural collections have been shown to be highly effective for younger children of immigrant families because those collections allowed immigrant children to "see images that reflect themselves and encounter stories in their native language and within the context of their personal cultures… [and] meet people like themselves and develop an appreciation for the beauty of their culture and the cultures of others" (Naidoo, 2014). While immigrants want those collections, they are not always promoted. Non-English immigrants of all age wants to keep their cultural heritage and it has been shown that a loss of language is quickly followed by a loss of culture (Wohlmuth, 2000). It seemed that librarians believed that marketing those collections to immigrant communities will lead to higher demands when they are already stretched thin with tight budgets. Promoting such collections would benefit libraries as they are very few other places promoting international language reading and print collections (Godin, 1994).

5.2.2 Immigration-related opportunities

Since the turn of the 20th century, there has been a push to provide adult education to newcomers (Larrotta, 2019). ESOL classes became an important segment of the adult education services provided to immigrant communities. These language programs take many forms such as

conversation, discussion groups, and as part of other skill-based curriculums such as those incorporated in libraries' job readiness programs (Kong, 2011). ESOL classes remain one of the most popular library programs with more demands than available seats (Wu, 2014). I discovered that ESOL classes that are paired with other skill-based literacy programs were some of the most effective services. Based on my study, it appeared that immigrants understood that the benefits of learning English may lead them to better opportunities. Also, I found that many participants who knew about the language classes also had some college experience. It is possible that they came to the US degreed, or were highly educated in their home country. I was expecting to find that my study participants were not exposed to higher education. Perhaps, those immigrants, working odd jobs and long- hours, facing the need for survival, might not see the need for and be informed of information literacy classes available in libraries.

Immigrants new to the US, seek credible legal information in order to facilitate their adaptation (Cuban, 2007). One of the practical ways libraries have helped immigrants is through workshops from libraries, and in partnership with other organizations. Those events have included legal information services dealing with immigration laws, citizenship workshops, filling out forms, sponsorships and deportation procedures, and specific immigrations programs such as those for TPS (Temporary Protected Status) applicants and refugees. My study showed that immigrants are looking for those life-determining practical services. Because this study did not ask about citizenship status, it is not clear if all who replied were legal immigrants and were looking to update their status (e.g. naturalized citizenship) or were at some stage of the immigration process and were thus confident that they will feel safe coming to libraries for help with those issues. Beyond these needs for immigration information is the immigrant desire to

take their destiny into their own hands. This is in contrast to some LIS discourse of immigrants as powerless and victims (Mckeown, 2016).

Public libraries support immigrant job training opportunities. My research shows that a portion of immigrant users are aware of those opportunities. In order to improve their socio-economic conditions, immigrants have to know that these opportunities exist. This is a type of information need that tackles a specific problem (such as finding a job). Immigrants used these services at different stages of their adaptation. The way they experience and use information in their daily life can be seen in their participation either in public libraries job training programs for newer immigrants through their English-learner programs, such as programs that merged Home Health aide programs with ESOL classes, or through other library programs that used job training as part of more advanced job skills–for example, those that teach advanced computer programs to Spanish or Chinese speakers. Again, their perception of reality, the way they see themselves in that moment of time-space, and the need to fill this perceived gap provide evidence to the use of Dervin's (1980, 1981, 1983) Sense-Making theory. In sense-making, individuals know what they need, and are their own experts to find ways to bridge obstacles.

I found that small business help was an important factor for participants to take part in library services. Public libraries have invested in purchasing business collections and databases for local entrepreneurs, and those interested in start-ups. Small businesses' point of service is staffed by business librarians, specialized staff, and others, such as the local Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORES) who provide workshops for patrons, grant writing, and hands-on skills training. Public libraries are active participants in local economic development (Bleiweis, 1997). In New York City, all three library systems have dedicated business resource centers that work with local organizations. Some patrons have used those assets in a variety of ways, such as

to open a new business, locate new customers or expand their business. These services are not used to their fullest because of their lack of promotion, and "the local merchant does not associate the public library with business assistance" (Weiss et al., 2011, p. 4). Immigrants in my research who mentioned their need for libraries to help them with their business needs might have been aware that those services were being provided or might have been already using these services. It is possible that these libraries' services that provide job training also promote business training opportunities. In any case, their decision-making might show a level of social and informational awareness to bridge the gap. This fits into Dervin's situation-gap-outcome triangle (Dervin & Frenette, 2001).

One new contribution of my research is the finding that immigrants' use of the library is heavily tilted toward access to children's resources, and it is one of their most desired types of services. Public libraries have a long history of supporting local children's literacy (Taylor et al., 2019). One-way public libraries help adult immigrants with children is by providing children's books, library events, in-house cultural and educational programs supplementing school activities such as STEAM-based hands on activities. Many cultural programs are conducted in the children's parents' first language. It is an important way for children to stay connected with the culture of their parents. Some of the most vibrant children's cultural activities in libraries happen in the children's rooms with dance, music, workshop performances. Burke's (2008) study on the use of public libraries by immigrants found that immigrant households with children affect public library use. Burke research could not tell if, at the individual level, a combination of the parent levels of education, income, and language proficiency were predictors of their school-age children's use of the library services. In my study, I found that that this was the case. Libraries providing materials to school-age children is a very strong determining factor for their

immigrant parents' use of public libraries. It would be of interest to know if the immigrant households lack of technology devices at home and the children's need for school work assistance would prompt more library visits. It is possible that immigrants' use of public libraries is limited to using children's services because they don't see anything relevant for themselves as adult users of the library (Rho, 2002). It is also possible that by using those services, parents know that children can be accustomed earlier to library services because they are faster to adapt and are quick learners, and serve as mediators for their parents (Chu, 1999). Also, the local popularity of these programs might be due to parents, especially mothers from the same linguistic group, and the neighborhood making use of the information and sharing it between themselves. This research fits in line with Chatman's (1986, 1991a, 1992, 1996, 1999) research on marginalized populations' use of information.

5.2.3 Community life-integrated opportunities

My research found that, for immigrants, the library as a place facilitates and adds value to community life. They see libraries both as a place that promotes their cultural heritage to the larger multicultural society. Consequently, they do not feel isolated and being passed judgment on. Both users and non-users value the public library in their community. Many immigrants consider public libraries to be better placed to respond to their needs. Some users in this study use the amenities inside the facility but do not borrow materials. Those onsite and non-borrowing users filled a social role by using the space less as a place where documents are being exchanged. This is in line with other studies that have described libraries as the third place for users, meaning a neutral place that is not work, and not home where one can belong (Hicks, 2013). Public libraries have remodeled their services and are rethinking their spaces, putting the focus on the users' needs, and their service needs, and not on the collection. This evolution was

necessary for the essential missions of the library, but it is also required for the library's social mission. As a result, a new way of organizing space in libraries was a crucial factor not only in the selection and organization of printed materials, but especially in the reception and participation of immigrant users in non-documentary services. Immigrants may have considered that libraries are one of a few places in their community with no transaction cost for usage where information is shared (Fisher et al., 2004a). Although some users complained about the lack of service hours, immigrant participants held libraries were held in high esteem. Participants' perception of libraries pointed to an element in which libraries were legitimate places to be to have a sense of belonging, possibly on the same level as other traditional venues where immigrants feel comfortable searching for information. (Caidi & Allard, 2005; Caidi et al., 2010).

My study reveals that immigrants see the library as a place where they can relax and have fun. It is possible that these immigrants have visited public libraries in some capacity. While in the library, they may have taken part in recreational activities for themselves or their children. Immigrants already know libraries are a place they can come to for leisure reading (Dali, 2013a). The perception of the library as a space to meet friends, enjoy recreational activities, and share information is possibly more acute for immigrant women (Audunson et al., 2011). Cultural performances and artistic activities tailored to immigrants encourage their social inclusions (Kleemola, 2017). The satisfaction of library users may be a factor in their continued use of library services. There is generally an information providing aspect behind these library services for children or adults. Deciding which programs to take part in adds to the everyday practice decision elements of immigrants in their interaction in libraries Participating in those activities, or reading these books for pleasure, is not random but is part of the information context in which

they live (Ross, 1999). This is in line with Savolainen's ELIS theory, in which a person's way of life is the result of their preference and the practical choices they make every day.

5.3 Immigrant interaction with librarians

The findings of Research Questions 2, (RQ 2) show that most librarian participants were eager to help immigrants find information. When I looked at the way in which librarians described their work with the immigrant population, I saw several instances in which they were very forthcoming about their commitment for serving immigrants, offering suggestions to improve library services, and providing numerous instances where they went above and beyond their duties. Some librarians expressed some reservations in their ability to work with users with limited library experience. It is not clear why some perceived those challenges to be difficult to overcome. The fact remain that while a segment of librarian believe that they have the tools needed to service immigrant communities, another segment of librarian where not too sure of the best way to service non English speaking immigrant in need for their service. It is not clear if some librarians believe that the constraint of current library policies limit their engagement. On the other hand, some librarians work with the frame of "what the library can do" for newcomers (Pilerot, 2018). The latter want to go over the restrictive and limited aspects of their job. One way to explain their desire of going above their duties, and their eagerness to help, is to consider that the nature of the relationship between a librarian and a patron is based on a personal interaction and personalized service (Tyckoson & Sosulski, 2017). Librarians believe that their service is important for all, and that immigrants will reap great benefits in using the adult education component of the library such as ESOL or computer classes (Vårheim, 2014). Librarians view their work with users with limited library experience as tough, but they understand that society will

greatly benefits from immigrants being successful (Pilerot, 2018). Some studies have categorized these librarian approaches to empowering users as neoliberal because of its connotation with material gains, accumulating property and participating in free markets (Huzar, 2014; Kajberg, 2013).

5.3.1 Public librarians facilitating information access to immigrants

I found that librarians see their role as facilitating immigrant success in the US by providing information about employment and small businesses. On the employment side, librarians know that immigrants seek to find work, and when they come to the library, they put themselves in the best possible position to find help with job related resources (Sirikul & Dorner, 2016). Through their personal contacts, they are informed of jobs high in demand. Immigrant under- employed may see low skills jobs as an appealing choice although these jobs often do not require a high school diplomas or a GED. My research identifies librarians' perception of their role as employment help and small business service provider as a critical aspect of their service. Although some immigrants in my research had bachelor's degrees, they were underemployed, and librarians still saw their role as very important to help them find better paying jobs. The services librarians provide in these areas are both general in nature, such as in a classroom setting, to a more personalized service, like helping with resume writing. The task of the librarian is delicate. Librarians may come across immigrants inadvertently sharing personal information such as their legal status. This library service also competes with other local services. Immigrants at times fall prey to predatory employment agencies who charge up-front fees for job placements and/or application fees for job searches; this sends immigrants to places with few job sites. These immigrants' financial vulnerability and shaky immigration status may

be made worse if English is not their first language and/or they have limited English proficiency (LEP).

The data suggests that librarians provide a range of services to local immigrant business owners. My research identified librarians' self-perceived role as an important information provider to immigrants' small business as an important category. Public libraries provide essential services to immigrant small job owners and entrepreneurs by providing trainings and facilitating immigrants access to government resources. In the environment of New York City, immigrant business ownership is substantial. Previous research has pointed out that business owners have their own information needs, which is not part of this research (Mehra et al., 2017). Some librarians pointed out their work facilitating access to trainings in the immigrant native language with local business experts as proud moments in their service to immigrants' populations. Although some librarians did not understand the socio-cultural barriers immigrants may face in starting and operating their own business, they indicated that language barriers are a big impediment to immigrants finding resources.

It was clear, in my research, that facilitating literacy programs to immigrants is important for librarians. According to the Pew Research Center (2019), almost thirty percent of immigrants lack a high school diploma. Library literacy programs were a traditional part of services as early as the end of the nineteenth century (Barber, 2001). Librarians understand that without English proficiency, there is a high likelihood that immigrants would spend many years with under-paying jobs. These skills contribute to immigrants "lifelong learning and productivity" (Liu, 2004, p. 435). Therefore, they actively promoted a variety of programs such as English to ESOL, ABE, and GED tests preparation courses. Though there are indications that the literacy programs were not always well advertised, those services are popular among immigrant

communities. Libraries either have their own in-house education programs or provide library space to local education agencies (LEAs), and other community-based organizations (CBOs). Library programs are built upon "learning communities through small group instruction in non-formal and informal settings that are primarily functional, but also empowering and reciprocal because learners teach each other as much as a teacher teaches them" (Kong, 2011, p. 389).

Public librarians' response to this research showed that they see their role as facilitating access to immigration resources. The analysis of the data I collected revealed an ensemble of resources public librarians employed such as providing credible CBO's for help to file Immigration papers, providing in-house assistance filing out immigrations citizenship forms, connecting immigrants with immigrations attorneys, and leading outreach to local immigrant opportunities regarding immigration resources at the library. In doing so, librarians protect immigrants against taking advantage of immigration scams. My research extended previous studies that have confirmed the work of librarians supporting the immigration need of immigrants (Audunson, 2016; Burke, 2008; McCook, 2007; van der Linden et al., 2014). This means that immigrants, regardless of their immigrants' status, had enough trust in the source of information, but also in being at the library location. Whether the trust was directed at the library itself as an institution, or at the librarian, did not matter as the access to these crucial resources encourage trust building (Vårheim, 2014).

The analysis of the collected data showed that librarians see their role as providing resources for adult immigrants, their teenage and younger children. As was revealed earlier, immigrants place a premium on library programs geared toward educating their children. My study revealed that librarians do their best to help parents with different types of programs such as bilingual workshops for parents, and that they have been instrumental in creating programs for

families of children and teens, during the school year, and during summer reading programs. Librarians are helping support immigrant families of all ages (Flores, & Pachon, 2008). Some immigrants' parents do not have the knowledge and skills to help their children in the American school environment and librarians in my study stated that they feel appreciated in providing access to books, and other medias to children and teens of immigrants. It is interesting that children and teen librarians in my research are the ones who obviously feel stronger about these services. This research is in line with other LIS literature on librarians work with immigrant children (Khoir et al. 2017; Lopez et al., 2017; Vårheim 2014).

Librarians in my research stated that they help facilitate immigrant access through teaching digital literacy so that immigrants can get the skills necessary to use computers and other technological devices. All types of patrons are assisted with computer access, but the need of the immigrant is critical. For example, when immigrants need to schedule an appointment with United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, these are done online. Libraries offer a growing number of digital services ranging from e-books to online programming (Clark & Perry, 2015). It's important for the librarians in my research that immigrants not be left behind. For them, being digitally inclusive means bilingual technology classes, and English classes with technological literacy skills be provided to members of these communities.

The role of librarians providing classes at the library terminals either through individualized on demand trainings or through formal classes varies across libraries. My research is in agreement with previous research demonstrating the role of librarians and libraries using their services to help immigrant populations (Díaz Andrade & Doolin, 2019; Gorham et al., 2013; Kinney, 2010; Lee & Chang, 2013). Although access to computers at public libraries is time-limited, librarians in this research understand that usually it did not discourage immigrants

from coming in to use it for important matters such as working on a resume or cover letter, and to access local government services. However, using the library's computers did not mean that immigrants knew how to use them, so digital literacy programs are critical.

5.3.2 Public librarians providing intangible supports to immigrants

I discovered through my research that the role of librarians providing empathetic library services is indispensable to a successful immigrant experience at the library. My research revealed that public librarians provide intangible supports to immigrants. Librarian participants felt strongly about helping immigrants. There is both an affective element and a cognitive element in the way librarians describe their services to newcomers. Librarian participants seemed genuine in their attempt to see their library through the immigrants' perceptions. "[I]n taking another's perspective you go beyond feelings. You seek to understand why the other person might think or act as he or she does, and try to explain it from his or her point of view. Perspective - taking carries with it the power of explanation, so critical to historical understanding and to problem - solving" (Skolnick, et al., 2004, p. 5). While some of those participants were also immigrants and attempted to recall their earlier experience as a new immigrant, other participants were not but still could relate in other ways, such as living in new areas, or being separated from friends and families. In addition to their strong emotional attachment to this issue, my study reveals that the participants use their training and professional expertise in providing broad attention to those communities. I was not expecting to find this category as a major aspect of librarian services. As a service to patrons in itself, empathy is not well studied in LIS, especially in the context of North American Library service (Phillips, 2016). These findings shed new light on this issue as there is very little in the literature on this aspect of services to immigrant populations. By looking at how the participants describe their use of

verbal, non-verbal, and other interpersonal communication skills, I deduced that this was in itself a separate category in providing services to immigrant populations.

Librarian participants in my study believe that they play a role in narrowing the gap in the digital divide for immigrants with lower rates of IT use. Public libraries have an important role to play because the information-seeking behavior and the description of the factors hampering information sharing could potentially help the ways in which libraries engage with the members' immigrant communities in which the digital divide is a sensitive issue. Librarians see that because technology use impacts everyone's lives, it is their role to address potential issues facing immigrants through computer literacy programs, Wi-Fi device lending, computer access, technology classes. When language has become an issue, librarians have set up bilingual technology classes. They also want immigrant to be aware of what they have to gain by updating their technological skills, such as getting better jobs, accessing more business opportunities, and participating in e-government. Increasing use of cell phone features such as video chats, texts, apps (such as WhatsApp, Facebook) have increased the pressure for immigrants to adopt technologies. The librarians in my study saw this as a matter of equity, and adaptation. However, the broad LIS description of identifying all immigrants' communities as IT illiterate has been problematic (Ndumu, 2020). LIS discursive practices generally situate immigrants from less advanced countries in less than flattering lights (Childers & Post, 1975; Lloyd et al., 2010). Some library practitioners have adopted this stand in their work (Ndumu, 2020). As a result, non-English speaking immigrants who come to this country with solid IT skills might not see the need to engage with librarians promoting their technology programs. This might create a sense that only low skills immigrant has a need for digital classes.

5.3.3 Public library services to immigrants, librarians, and institutional issues

The findings of Research Question 3 (RQ 3) reveal that staffing shortages are among several of the barriers librarians face in serving immigrant patrons. Librarians lamented that insufficient staffing was preventing them from adequately doing their job. By staffing shortage, they meant not having enough of their fellow librarians in their location to provide needed services. They view this as a serious issue because it led to work stress, and work stress results in low job satisfaction. Librarianship, at times, is viewed as a low stress profession (Smith, 2015). Librarians argue that librarian retirement and positions going unfilled, mean that they have to do more to provide the same services to a clientele that is very diverse, and demanding. Although gratifying, the librarians in my study contended that working with the public causes a high level of stress. Other research in LIS has examined the impact of stress on librarians (Linden et al., 2018; Martin, 2020). In the context of public service to underserved communities, such as non-English speaking immigrants, this staffing shortage is seldom studied.

Many librarian participants talked about budget cuts as detrimental to their work. Library budget cuts affects their work with library users' in different ways, such as in the outdated public computers, unstable broadband connections, lack of resources allocated to their library in terms of books, CD, DVDs (Bennett-Kapusniak, 2015). As stated previously, this research found that these issues significantly affect underemployed immigrants. Public librarians were aware that these issues affect underserved users but felt powerless to do anything about it. Another consequence of reduced budget is hours of operation, which they lamented are not always conducive to immigrant working long hours. In NYC, public libraries' funding streams come from different sources, but the lion's share come from New York City public funding via annual allocated funds (De Blasio et al., 2021). While not directly affiliated with the City and independently run, New York City libraries compete for budget allocations with all other NYC

departments including emergency service departments such as the police (NYPD), and the fire department (FDNY). Public libraries also have to rely on public support and advocacy to keep or increase their budgets (Comito et al., 2012). Over time, many public libraries have gone through an austerity phase, leading to a substantial number of service transformations in which librarians fill more roles, and staff, including librarians are let go (Shaffer, 2021). In pushing for more money, libraries have, in their advocacy efforts and through media campaigns, framed members of the underserved communities as needy to shift public discourse (Jaeger et al., 2014). These attention-grabbing headlines are problematic because they frame immigrants as "victims", and "suffering", and "often stripped of their individuality and personhood" (Schmidt, 2021).

Another problem identified by librarian participants with their services to immigrant patrons is staff training. Other researchers have looked at the impact of various library trainings on the immigrant users' perception at the library (Karbach, 2016; Morgan, et al., 2018; Paola Picco, 2008; Tumuhairwe, 2013). They have found that librarians must be specifically trained to service an increasingly diverse group of cultures, ethnic origins, and socioeconomic status. Participants view that training staff is important in order to create a first impression, and have newcomers return to the library. They spoke about the need to create training on cultural sensitivity, multilingual collection development, and creating bilingual programs for immigrants for different age groups. They also noted the benefits of receiving the most up to date information directly through in-house trainings done in collaboration with representatives of local government. These staff trainings led to an information ground of mutual collaboration to address a goal (Sonnenwald, 2006). Some participants pointed out that the need to share information with other fellow librarians is as important as providing that information with the public.

Library outreach efforts to immigrants who may or may not have used libraries was one of the barriers identified in this research. Library outreach is viewed as a means to connect underserved populations to library resources (Hayden, 2004). These services are a central part to most public libraries. There were indications that librarians viewed their outreach efforts as in need of improvement. They acknowledge that, because of resource limitations, some neighborhoods do not get as much attention as they might need. LIS literature mentioned previously in chapter 2 established the difficulty in approaching some immigrant communities because of sociocultural factors (Cuban, 2007; Dennis, 2012; Koerber, 2018; Savolainen, 2016). While most librarians perceived that they had a role to play in the outreach efforts, a couple of participants were not sure if it was their responsibility or those of a selected group of staff. Some participants thought that the library should focus on those that periodically come in the library, while others believed that public libraries have a duty to reach out to non-users. These issues have been documented in LIS literature as organizational problems hampering effective outreach to underserved populations (Hayden, 2004; Savolainen, 2016). Though libraries provide resources to all immigrants regardless of immigration status, the way libraries engage in outreach affects undocumented immigrants the most. Because they can't integrate as easily as other immigrant groups, they are dependent on library resources which are free, but without outreach they will not know these are available (Koerber, 2018).

5.3.4 Public librarian issues, and services to immigrants

This study demonstrates that immigrant language and culture is seen by some librarians as unfamiliar. LIS researchers have pointed out that librarian background, prior life experiences, or personality, among others, influences the ways in which they connect with immigrants, and visualize their information needs (Jaeger et al., 2013; Mestre, 2010). As stated previously in this

research, librarians are eager and empathetic in the way they serve and approach those users. However, in the conversational data collection, there were instances of cultural subjectivities where their descriptions of the transnational and/or sociocultural element in immigrants' lives were described as "different" or as "other." In a multicultural perspective, these choices of words may be seen as problematic because they are stigmatic. These gaps between librarians' concrete actions toward serving immigrants and discourse have been documented in LIS literature before and can be considered as a form of power dynamic at play (Haider & Bawden, 2007; Mckeown, 2016; Scott, 1990). Librarians, although invested in helping immigrants adapt to their new land, through unintentional and awkward depictions may lead to controversies, as "power is exercised epistemologically in the dual practices of naming and evaluating" (Goldberg, 1993, p. 150).

This study discovered that librarians consider the perception of public libraries might be the reason for these barriers. Though libraries have the obligation to provide equitable access to all, there were several instances, in this research, where they seemed to indicate that the lack of services may be due to those immigrants' background. During the focus group there was a movement of thought from "what can we do" as librarians to a "I wish they knew" in talking about services to some immigrant communities. Non-English-speaking immigrants are sometimes viewed as needing more efforts to service when in fact they need might different efforts (Gitner & Rosenthal, 2008; Koerber, 2018; Kreicker, 1998). These perceived barriers will impact the development of library services to these communities (American Library Association, 2008). The American Library Association has provided resources in print and online for training librarians in servicing these communities.

The last challenging barrier identified were the inconsistent view of librarians in regard to who should be responsible for immigrant literacy instruction. Most librarians take their role of

promoting digital inclusions seriously (Bertot et al., 2016). The duties to teach computer literacy is not always assigned to librarians but delegated to information specialists and other staff (Marmion, 1998; Youngman, 1999). However, there was always a sense that librarians as information experts should fulfil those roles and supporting staff should not do a librarian job. It is an interesting problem because in communities with low access to computers at home, library users' access to information and communications technology is critical (Bennett-Kapusniak, 2015). This research showed that this dual role for these librarians can be challenging. Librarians are expected to be not only the local community public information expert but also to take an additional and more practical role teaching and being responsible for information systems (Martzoukou & Elliott, 2016; Stevenson & Domsy, 2016). "The biggest technology challenge facing the library profession today is that of preparing our employees to use the technology effectively. To meet this challenge, libraries must pay much more attention to technology training and computer skills than they traditionally have in the past" (Marmion, 1998). Those issues came to light in this research. In the case of NYC libraries, the problems are delicate as the convergence of NYC library systems agreements with the librarian local unions, policy issues, and their lack of preparation as technology trainers come into play.

5.4 Research summary

There is an intersection in which "the immigrant desired types of library services" and "the role public librarians play in engaging those immigrants" meet. A library patron (or prospective patron) who looks for library services (a public institution) to fulfil their needs operate as part of a system (Brophy, 2006). That system includes many stakeholders, and entities up to and including local elected leaders. Although this study dealt with immigrant interaction

with public libraries, what was being investigated through the research questions was the interaction of immigrants and public librarians. For convenience, this research operates also within the terminology of immigrants' "desired" information as well as their information "needs" which is a generally used term in the LIS literature. The connection is critical to comprehend the phenomenon being studied in this research.

Relationship between immigrant desired types of library services & role public librarians play

The desire of the patron can be understood by "what the service should be" while the librarians' response to their role may indicate more of a "what that service is." By looking at both sides, I have a better comprehension of what is really at work. There is a gap between immigrant desires and librarian roles. In linking immigrant-desired need, the diverse type of desired access categories such as information, technology, and digital literacy appear to match the categories librarians offer such as facilitating access to those services. Therefore, there are multiple immigrant-desired categories that are connected to librarian roles in facilitating access to those services. In addition, a single immigrant category also matches more than one librarian category. For example, an immigrant category such as technology access may be linked to facilitating access to literacy programs, supporting computer learning, or closing the digital divide.

Relationship between immigrants' desired types of library services & challenges faced by public librarians

The limitations faced by the librarians appear to show that they feel their work expectations toward servicing those patrons is not what it needs to be. Whenever those issues

arise, librarians appear to believe that the library did not meet the information need of their immigrant customers. Immigrants' own expectations toward libraries and librarians may vary. When immigrants come to the library, it might be because they wander by, or someone recommended to them library services (Lingel, 2015). They may be current users, past library users, or they may never have been in a library building before. In all instances there might be some reservations toward the institution. Immigrants might have a residual or noticeable level of fear, "[i]mmigrants bring with them the trust levels of their home country" … [although the]" trust levels of first-generation immigrants show significant increases over time" (Tyckoson & Sosulski, 2017, p. 263). In linking the data, if immigrant-desired services such as ESOL classes, immigration and citizenship programs, job and career assistance are not fulfilled because of all or part of the library challenges as stated by the librarians, their information needs would be severely impacted.

Relationships between role public librarians play & challenges public librarians face

Similarly, services are impacted when librarians believe that they face challenges in serving immigrant patrons. Services to immigrants will be impacted and prevent their information needs being fulfilled whenever any of those challenge categories is present: staffing shortage, budget cuts, staff training, library outreach to immigrants, unfamiliarity with immigrant language and culture, immigrant perception of library services, and librarian role as technology access trainer.

5.5 Implications of this research

Based on the immigrant and librarian data, I can confirm prior research of immigrants having different needs. Depending on how long they have been in the US, their desired library

services will be different. My research investigated immigrants' information seeking in the context of the public library, explored librarians' role in helping immigrants, and the issues they faced providing services to immigrant populations. The implications of this research comprise three aspects: the theoretical, the methodological, and the practical implications.

5.5.1 Theoretical Implications

This research adds to the scholarship on immigrant information needs and information seeking behavior. LIS discourse places a heavy emphasis on best practices but there is a need to take a step back and to carefully examine the issues facing libraries (Andersen, 2005). LIS scholars offered various approaches to understanding immigrants' heterogeneous and complex world. It is important that those theories take into consideration multicultural perspectives on information seeking as those users seek diverse resources, and view information institutions differently. Because there exists such diversity, there are numerous ways these communities seek information in everyday life. Librarians would benefit from this research by integrating its theoretical implications into public library service design for immigrant communities. The public library is often considered as a critical institution to tackle the local information inequality (Sin, 2011).

Dervin's (1983) user centered approach to information seeking is useful to a public library setting because it is possible to use participants' data to reflect on the way in which they provide meaning to their library experience and receive new information. Dervin's sense making rests on a situation-gap-help paradigm in which a person seeks to make sense of a situation, is unable to bridge the gap, and is driven to seek help (Dervin, 1992). By arguing that humans need to reduce their own anxious mind, to feel secure, to make sense, thus the make sense of elements

in their environment, Dervin provides an avenue to understand research participants' behavior at specific moments in time-space (Foreman-Wernet, 2003). Although this study was not designed to seek the influence of the cognitive and communicative elements on the information-seeking process (an important aspect in Dervin's theory), the sense-making triangle model was at play in how many immigrant participants took part in library programs and services and came with new information.

Information needs result from the search for meaning by an individual within a certain context (Chatman, 1987, 1999). Among Chatman's contributions to LIS scholarship is the focus on the sociocultural and sociolinguistic context in shaping individual behavior toward the usefulness of information. Their inclination to seek people with whom they share a common bond is understandable. Chatman explains individuals made personal choices to break away from the outside world, and instead seek a shared commonality and sense of predictability in the boundary of their "small world." A life lived in the round is about the creation of a support system where information is shared within. While common sociocultural experiences shaped immigrant everyday experiences, I found that they also aim to be involved in activities and community life outside of their world. In addition, Chatman's (1996) findings that people who are "information poor" are suspicious of outsiders, engage in secrecy and deception to control their lives might not be applicable to all groups such as immigrants because of the variety of immigrants' backgrounds, and their multiple forms of information behavior (Fulton, 2010). In addition, already at a cultural, social, and language disadvantage, this insensitive depiction widely available in LIS literature risks creating more obstacles to immigrants' social participation and their wellbeing.

Savolainen's (1995) everyday life information seeking (ELIS) framework is a great example of theory examining the everyday information practices of a particular group of individuals. I considered the underemployed non-English speaking immigrant information landscape in the social and cultural context of their interaction with NYC public libraries. The data, as illustrated by immigrant perception of the Internet as a credible source of information, and their interaction with public librarians, shaped their information environments and suggests that friends and families were not their only source. This finding provided new information on how personal choices both mundane and substantive immigrants make in deciding to engage or not engage with public libraries.

While the literature on immigrants in libraries was useful in guiding my research, the focus of those bodies of work did not necessarily address the information needs of under-employed immigrants with limited English speaking proficiency who may have or may not have used public libraries. Most studies have sought to depict what is similar between immigrants' information needs and information-seeking behavior rather than how those needs might be different. The finding in this research confirmed some of the theories reported in chapter 2. My study can be seen supporting the argument that the intersections of the information experience of immigrants and staff at public libraries plays a significant role in their information behaviors. Those elements are the reason for their information need, the distinctive trait of their information behavior, their desired information need, their difficulty in accessing information, the services that librarians offer to newcomers, and the barrier for the library staff.

5.5.2 Methodological Implication

The data from the immigrant surveys, the librarians' surveys, interviews, and the focus group was analyzed and examined using principles of open coding as discussed above. I used

open coding which usually takes place concurrently during the data analysis progression as the researcher carefully makes implications among notions while transferring those (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). In my study, themes developed by constantly comparing the answers of the data. This constant comparative analysis of the data gradually evolved into a core of emerging conceptual schemes. Further refinements resulted in fewer categories that the other codes were related to.

In my study a theory was not produced. Generating a theory is time consuming, and needs to be tested (Glaser, 1978). According to Vollstedt, and Rezat, (2019)" the main epistemological interest [of grounded theory] lies in predicting and explaining behavior" (p. 83). Open coding was particularly useful to developing themes in my research. However, this attempt to conceptualize a system involving a certain type of immigrant use of the public library to resolve their information need led to unforeseen issues throughout the course of the research. Formulating a theory based on the everyday information life of a group of people means that the work is centered on a social dimension. Smiraglia argued that "theory does not exist in a vacuum, but rather in a system that explains the domains" (2002, p. 331). At the same time, the goal of this research seeking to provide a roadmap for public libraries to improve better services to immigrants. I found that the limitation ranging from the budgeting constraint during my doctoral research to the effects of data gathering during the COVID-19 pandemic, it became clear that using a full-fledged grounded theory (GT) to produce a full-fledged and testable theory would not be the best approach. The data analysis with the open coding provided a strong conceptual base while providing significant descriptive elements illustrating rich insight into the phenomena. My research highlights the need to research certain groups of immigrant

information behavior. The distinctive methodological approach in investigating their information need was particularly helpful in this research

5.5.3 Practical Implications

This study discovered that when an immigrant first approaches a librarian with an information need, this is perhaps a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that may encourage or push that immigrant away. That opportunity might never have happened again as their primary focus to seek opportunities to create a better life for themselves and their families. Previous studies have reported librarian interactions at the reference desk with immigrants (Dali, 2013b; Katopol, 2014) but few have explained the unique information consequence of such experience. This dissertation offers practical implications for librarians and library administrators. Making sure that steps are taken by the library staff so that the immigrants be provided a more fruitful and positive experience is a noble cause in this study. Immigrant point of view is central in this research, and a "one size fits all approach is not an option." This study is as much about those communities as it is about those individual needs. In this research, information need is defined as the motivation people think and feel to seek information (Taylor, 1962). Information seeking behavior is the realization by an individual of the existence of an information need and ends when that need is believed to have been satisfied (Krikelas, 1983). When people change milieu, it is normal that they exhibit information behavior unfamiliar to those who live in their new land. They will seek information the way in which they are accustomed. With immigrants, it means through close contacts such as families, and friends, or places where they can meet people from their own communities, such as small local immigrant businesses (Caidi & Allard, 2005). This has led them to face difficulties as they become insular and shun outsiders (Chatman, 1996). This has raised issues for how librarians and libraries can best provide outreach and services. My

findings will impact how the immigrant patrons are being served in the public library setting. They will have the potential to create better customer experience for immigrants' patrons and the library staff who will be affected by getting positive feedbacks from those satisfied patrons. Finally, my findings will be made available to the stakeholders at New York City public libraries for long-term planning, training and devising policies and procedures.

Service design implication to address non-English speaking immigrant patron desired library service.

A refined library service model that considers the desired information needs for diverse groups of immigrants will lead to better information equity. My research showed that the services immigrants want from public libraries are accessible information, technology access, multicultural programs and services, multicultural collections, ESOL classes, immigration and citizenship programs, job and career assistance, small businesses help, services for immigrants with children, facilitating community life, and leisure activities. Along with technology classes, ESOL and adult education classes are some of the most mentioned and requested. On the face of these multiple needs, it might be difficult to treat each of those requests the same way. Librarians have a duty to try to be aware of the basic needs of all their local users to provide the best possible services. For a newcomer, especially one who does not use English as a first language and may speak it with some limitations, interacting with a librarian is intimidating and filled with some level of distrust. According to Taylor (1968), studies on the reference interview at the reference desk describe information needs as following a continuum pattern starting from a visceral need (conscious or unconscious), a conscious need (making an individual conscious mental description), a formalized need (which can be formally stated but with existence of

uncertainty) then proceed to a compromised need (based on what questions can be answered). Librarians need to be skillful at uncovering the immigrant real desire in order to successfully deliver the best possible option for that individual user. But Kuhlthau's information search process (ISP) is another frame to look at the problem. She formulates six stages in this process: initiation, selection, exploration, formulation, collection, and presentation. Users information uncertainty and anxiety in the information search process should be taking into consideration in designing services to users facing a complex set of information issues.

Service design implication for improving librarian services to those populations

Public librarians continue to play a critical role in the information experience of the immigrant library user. My research indicated that public librarians see themselves providing essential services. Those findings appear to show the need to increase more local resources to librarians so they can address the needs of their immigrant patrons. If, as the studies have shown (Ellis, et al., 2014; Moraga, et al., 2019; Singer, 2004), the number of immigrants in the U.S. is increasing, and that they are bypassing traditional ports of entry to spread across diverse places in the country, then local leaders must do more for all libraries. While allocating resources to immigrant services in some communities is controversial, librarians have a role to play in educating taxpayers and stakeholders to the benefits of helping immigrants. One way to accomplished this is by framing it as working with local immigrants who were helped by library services on their way to success.

Service design implications for reducing public librarians' issues in providing services to non-English speaking immigrant patron

The issues librarians face in working with these communities must be addressed. My study points to the difficulties librarians face include staffing shortages, budget cuts, staff training, library outreach to immigrants, unfamiliarity with immigrant language and culture, immigrant perception of library services, and the librarian role as technology access trainer. This research and others (Johnston, & Audunson, 2019; Savolainen, 2016; Wang, et al., 2020) have expressed concern on the quality of services to immigrants because of these issues. Library administrators have a role to play to ensure that organizational, operational, or procedural barriers do not impede the services public libraries provide to these communities. Public librarians should dutifully work to limit the impacts of these difficulties. For example, librarians can refer immigrant users to other nearby libraries providing such services or reputable NGOs providing similar services.

5.6 Limitations of the research

Some researchers have argued that all research projects have their limitations as none can be perfectly designed (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). Limitations of this research exist in the research design sample, the data collection, and the researcher subjectivity. Limitations associated with my research which can inform future research designs are discussed in the next chapter.

Sample size: The sample sizes of both the immigrant participants and the librarians were small and are not be generalizable other large urban areas. Also, the characteristics of the immigrant population in New York City may not be the same in other urban areas. This study may have the most relevance to immigrants and librarians in cities where newcomers have a certain awareness of public libraries, and where librarians regularly interact with racially and ethnically diverse immigrant populations. Similarly, the librarian portion of the collection relied on a snowball

strategy. This limits the representativeness of the public librarians to a group of librarians who knew each other and might not represent all of the librarians in New York City.

Data collection. As the result of the statewide COVID-19 pandemic restriction, I relied on underemployed immigrant participants who had online access to a computer, knew how to use it, and could participate within the time the study was posted online. This may have limited the participant pool since 50% of the immigrant participants in this study possessed at least a bachelor's degree. Some of the immigrant and librarians' responses referred to what they used to do before the pandemic. It might be that the COVID-19 situation was very much on their minds. An in-person data collection might have been richer in data. It is possible that the information experiences of immigrants with limited job skills, limited income, and limited English-speaking skills reported in this research could be different than immigrants with the same descriptors who were not able to participate in an online study.

Researcher subjectivity. I researched a subject that matters deeply to me. The intersectionality of being an immigrant, a librarian practitioner, and the researcher was challenging during this research even though I took great precaution to reflect and filter my perspectives. In raising my own subjectivity, my goal is to be transparent and accountable in my research findings while providing "multiple strategies of validity… to create reader confidence in the accuracy of the findings" (Creswell, 2003, p. 184).

5.7 Chapter conclusion

This chapter provided a comprehensive discussion of the findings. Open coding were used to analyze the data. The immigrant participant accounts showed they had significant service needs and had high expectations for public libraries. Along with their desired services such as

literacy needs and immigration opportunities, commonly found in other LIS studies, this study found that immigrants' needs were heavily tilted toward providing resources for their children. One of the new findings that my research showed is that immigrants want to fully participate in their local community life while keeping their cultural identity. Immigrant participants look for practical solutions, and the way public librarians can help them with a range of services beneficial to them who might be facing socio-economic difficulties. Librarian participant accounts indicated that they strongly want to help immigrants succeed. This study is the first to provide evidence that alongside the information provided, public librarians provide intangible support to immigrants. Because of their unique experience in providing reference interviews and searching for targeted information and their familiarity with government services, they are well-placed to serve their patrons and provide support. They face significant organizational barriers, and their own view on immigrants may negatively affect how those services are performed. Public libraries still represent one of the last places where any immigrants who come through its door can freely access information.

Chapter 6 Conclusion

6.1 Overview

The objective of this exploratory qualitative case study was to understand immigrants' everyday information experiences and their participation (or lack of) in public library services. To explore the research questions, I originally devised a design based on gathering data exclusively on immigrants. However, the pandemic made it almost impossible for me to collect data onsite in New York City. Instead, I had to reach the population of interest online as opposed to the planned community venues that were closed to me as a researcher. Following a pilot study, I was able to collect data for 30 immigrant participants in a survey. I then reached out to public librarians who serve immigrants and found they were very accessible online during this pandemic. After another subsequent pilot study of 3 participants, I recruited 30 public librarians in the New York City area who were asked to take part in questionnaire, interview, and focus group data collection to provide librarian perspectives on meeting the needs of recent immigrants. The data from the immigrant surveys, the librarians' surveys, interviews, and the focus group was analyzed and examined using principles of open coding. In total, I identified 11 categories (themes) of desired types of library services, 8 categories of roles that public librarians play in engaging immigrants in their daily lives to meet their information needs, and 7 categories of challenging barriers public librarians face in providing services to underemployed immigrants.

6.2 Key findings

The results of the first research question (RQ1), revealed that there are multiple services needed by immigrants who are underemployed and with limited English-speaking skills. The services immigrant want from public libraries are accessible information, technology access,

multicultural programs and services, multicultural collections, ESOL classes, immigration and citizenship programs, job and career assistance, small businesses help, and leisure activities. Technology classes, ESOL and adult education classes are some of the most mentioned and requested. While some of the above findings were in line with research on immigrant populations, I found that immigrants' use of the library is heavily focused on access to children's resources, and it is one of their most desired types of services. In addition, my study reveals that immigrants see the library as a place where they can relax and have fun. One of the new findings that my research showed is that immigrants want to fully participate in their local community life while keeping their immigrant identity.

The results of the second research question (RQ2) confirmed that the role of the public library staff is critical in helping underemployed and marginalized populations cope with different forms of assistance, both onsite and online. Public librarians see themselves providing the following core services: eagerness in facilitating access to library resources, providing information about employment small businesses, facilitating access to literacy programs, facilitating access to immigration resources, providing resources for adult immigrants and their teens and younger children, supporting computer learning, offering empathetic services, and closing the digital divide. Because of the librarian's unique experience in providing reference interviews and searching for targeted information, and their familiarity with government services, public library staff are well-placed to serve immigrants and other patrons. This study is the first to provide evidence that alongside the information provided, public librarians provide intangible supports to immigrants.

The findings from research question three (RQ3 reveal that public librarians face different challenges in serving immigrant customers that may lead to the underutilization of

library services. These difficulties are: staffing shortages, budget cuts, staff training, library outreach to immigrants, unfamiliarity with immigrant language and culture, immigrant perception of library services, and the librarian's role as technology access trainer.

Finally, the results demonstrated that a cohesive and ongoing training approach for library staff is necessary to improve the service to immigrant patrons. In the same vein, the policy and procedures of these public libraries should also address the service needs of these library patrons. It is crucial that their feedback be heard and should matter as much as any other vocal members of the communities regarding the service provided to them by the library. It is important to note the limitation of this research which is that dealing with the public can be sometimes challenging. Consequently, it is possible that even with these above rectifying steps by the public library and changes made, some immigrant patrons might still not be satisfied with the way those libraries are addressing their pressing needs. However, it is certain that most immigrant patrons, if they choose to come to the library, will regard their library experience in a more positive light if these suggested changes are made.

6.3 Recommendations for future research

The findings of this qualitative case study have underlined numerous issues, some of which warrant additional inquiry and others that have implications for public librarian practice.

Future research: LIS scholarship

In this dissertation, the two groups of participants, immigrants and public librarians, were studied to answer the overarching research question (MRQ) as defined in Section 1.7: what are the information experiences of immigrants with limited job skills, limited income, and limited English-speaking skills, and how do libraries serve or fail to serve their information needs?

Future studies should specifically explore immigrants at various stages of their adaptation process. This study explored immigrants who have been in the US for up to 10 years. Future studies should recruit a much larger pool of immigrants and look at immigrants who have been in the US for a longer period of time and their experiences with public libraries in their quest for information. In addition, future studies should specifically look at multicultural instruction in library schools and staff training efficacy in the delivery of public library services to immigrant populations. This research found that the information practices of immigrants affect their socioeconomic status in the long term. Therefore, other possible areas for future investigations may consider looking specifically at immigrants with lower socioeconomic status such as those who work in immigrant-dominated industries working odd hour jobs such as nurse's aides, cab drivers, or cleaners, and how public libraries who have set hours of service can help their information needs.

Future research: library practice

Based on the findings of the first research question, future research on library practice should combine more the different service-based programs when offering classes to immigrants. Most immigrant participants desired multiple services and were eager to receive those services for their practical needs. Because immigrant information needs are complex, offering multiple programs is more effective in making a difference in the immigrant information experience. Action must be taken to combine most ESOL programs with computer literacy. An immigrant who speaks English more proficiently, and becomes more skilled at using new technologies, will probably be more successful than one who enrolled in either an adult literacy program or computer literacy program. There would be a need to offer different classes based depending on their needs, and skills. We can do the same for other immigrant needs such as combining job and

career assistance, or small businesses with library instructions. The point would be that stand-alone immigrant-based programs would be a thing of the past.

Based on the findings of the second research question, future research on library practice could focus on training librarians with an emphasis on serving multicultural populations. My research showed that public librarians see themselves providing critical core services and that they see themselves as allies of those communities. This research has highlighted that they are generally satisfied in their role. However, they must receive the training that reflects the reality in their community branch library to be more effective. They should have a greater awareness that they are in a position of power effect, and the way they deliver such services make all the difference in the way immigrant views and approachable staff. Perhaps librarians with practical experience serving immigrant populations can be called in to help facilitate hands on training on servicing those user groups.

Based on the findings of the third research question, future research on library practice should seriously look at the work pressures librarians face in serving immigrant users. This research specifically examined immigrant services and librarians' perception of barriers affecting their work in respect to these communities. They stated that a host of issues impede their work. Library administrators would need to look closely at the specific relationship of those barriers (staffing shortage, budget cuts, staff training, library outreach to immigrants, unfamiliarity with immigrant language and culture, immigrant perception of library services, and librarian role as technology access trainer) to immigrant services.

In conclusion, a significant number of immigrants move to the US in the quest for better socio-economic opportunities. Immigrants faced significant issues in their new lands that sometimes led to many challenges. Their level of education, English proficiency and information

practices will impact their success in the US. Public libraries should continue not only to provide critical services for immigrants' information needs but also improve the way those services are provided.

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Appendix A: IRB Exempt Status Letter Original and Modification

UNIVERSITY of WISCONSIN
UWMILWAUKEE
Department of University Safety & Assurances

Leah Stoiber
IRB Administrator
Institutional Review Board
Engelmann 270
P. O. Box 413
Milwaukee, WI 53201-0413
(414) 662-3544

http://www.irb.uwm.edu
lstoiber@uwm.edu

New Study - Notice of IRB Exempt Status

Date: September 22, 2020

To: Dietmar Wolfram, PhD
Dept: School of Information Studies

CC: Jean Rene

IRB#: 21.090
Title: Exploring the Information Experience of the Immigrant Public Library Nonuser in New York City.

After review of your research protocol by the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee Institutional Review Board, your protocol has been granted Exempt Status under Category 2 as governed by 45 CFR 46.104(d).

Additionally, your protocol has been granted **Level 3** confidentiality for Payments to Research Subjects per UWM Accounting Services Procedure: 2.4.6.

This protocol has been approved as exempt for three years and IRB approval will expire on September 21, 2023. If you plan to continue any research related activities (e.g., enrollment of subjects, study interventions, data analysis, etc.) past the date of IRB expiration, please respond to the IRB's status request that will be sent by email approximately two weeks before the expiration date. If the study is closed or completed before the IRB expiration date, you may notify the IRB by sending an email to irbinfo@uwm.edu with the study number and the status, so we can keep our study records accurate.

Any proposed changes to the protocol must be reviewed by the IRB before implementation, unless the change is specifically necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects. The principal investigator is responsible for adhering to the policies and guidelines set forth by the UWM IRB, maintaining proper documentation of study records and promptly reporting to the IRB any adverse events which require reporting. The principal investigator is also responsible for ensuring that all study staff receive appropriate training in the ethical guidelines of conducting human subjects research.

As Principal Investigator, it is also your responsibility to adhere to UWM and UW System Policies, and any applicable state and federal laws governing activities which are independent of IRB review/approval (e.g., FERPA, Radiation Safety, UWM Data Security, UW System policy on Prizes, Awards and Gifts, state gambling laws, etc.). When conducting research at institutions outside of UWM, be sure to obtain permission and/or approval as required by their policies.

Contact the IRB office if you have any further questions. Thank you for your cooperation, and best wishes for a successful project.

Respectfully,
Leah Stoiber
Leah Stoiber
IRB Administrator

UNIVERSITY of WISCONSIN
UWMILWAUKEE
Department of University Safety & Assurances

Melody Harries
IRB Administrator
Institutional Review Board
Engelmann 270
P. O. Box 413
Milwaukee, WI 53201-0413
414-662-3544

uwm.edu/irb
harries@uwm.edu

Modification/Amendment Notice of IRB Exempt Status

Date: March 22, 2021

To: Wolfram Dietmar
Dept: SOIS

CC: Jean Rene

IRB#: 21.090
Title: Exploring the Information Experience of the Immigrant Public Library Nonuser in New York City.

After review of your proposed changes to the research protocol by the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee Institutional Review Board, your protocol still meets the criteria for Exempt Status under Category 2 as governed by 45 CFR 46.104 subpart d, and your protocol has received modification/amendment approval for:

- Adding new subject group
- Changing eligibility criteria, sample size, and recruitment methods for immigrant subject group

This protocol has been approved as exempt for three years and IRB approval will expire on September 21, 2023. Before the expiration date, you will receive an email explaining how to either keep the study open or close it. If the study is completed before the IRB expiration date, you may notify the IRB by sending an email to irbinfo@uwm.edu with the study number and the status.

Any proposed changes to the protocol must be reviewed by the IRB before implementation, unless the change is specifically necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects. The principal investigator is responsible for adhering to the policies and guidelines set forth by the UWM IRB, maintaining proper documentation of study records and promptly reporting to the IRB any adverse events which require reporting. The principal investigator is also responsible for ensuring that all study staff receive appropriate training in the ethical guidelines of conducting human subjects research.

As Principal Investigator, it is also your responsibility to adhere to UWM and UW System Policies, and any applicable state and federal laws governing activities which are independent of IRB review/approval (e.g., FERPA, Radiation Safety, UWM Data Security, UW System policy on Prizes, Awards and Gifts, state gambling laws, etc.). When conducting research at institutions outside of UWM, be sure to obtain permission and/or approval as required by their policies.

Contact the IRB office if you have any further questions. Thank you for your cooperation and best wishes for a successful project.

Respectfully,
Melody Harries

Melody Harries
IRB Administrator

Appendix B. Recruitment Flier, Consent Form, Questionnaire Protocol, and Gift Card form for Immigrant Participant

Research Study on Public Libraries and Recent Immigrants

Research Participants Needed

For more information, contact JEAN RENE [Phone (347) 370-9215; Email: JEANRENE@UWM.EDU]

Are you an immigrant who wants to share your opinion about the public library?

Take part in a study investigating the information experiences of recent immigrants in public libraries. Your ideas can help improve library services for immigrants. The study questions specifically address your everyday information needs.

We encourage you to participate by scanning the QR code:

Eligibility

You are at least 18 years' old

You are learning English

You have lived in the United States for less than 10 years

Compensation

Option to receive a $ 25 gift card for participating in this study

Survey Location

Online at bit.ly/31A8nIL

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Recent Immigrant Library Use Study (347) 370-9215	Recent Immigrant Library Use Study (347) 370-9215	Recent Immigrant Library Use Study (347) 370-9215	Recent Immigrant Library Use Study (347) 370-9215	Recent Immigrant Library Use Study (347) 370-9215	Recent Immigrant Library Use Study (347) 370-9215	Recent Immigrant Library Use Study (347) 370-9215	Recent Immigrant Library Use Study (347) 370-9215

Consent Form to participate in this research questionnaire

What is this research about?

The study is being conducted in order to understand the challenges public librarians face in engaging underemployed immigrants, and the information experiences of new immigrants in public libraries. The research is being led by Jean Rene, a doctoral student at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. We are inviting you to participate. If you have any questions about anything in this form, please contact Jean.

What is a research questionnaire?

A research questionnaire is a form consisting of a series of questions asked to collect information from people.

What do I need to know to decide if I should join this study?

Here are some of the main things you should think about before choosing to join this study. As an immigrant, you must have met those following 3 conditions:

1. You must be at least 18 years old.
2. You are an immigrant.
3. You must have been in the United States for less than 10 years.

If you agree to participate, we will need you to answer those questions. This questionnaire may take up to 20 minutes of your time.

Are there any risks to participate?

There is no risk to you from your participation in this study. If you feel uncomfortable answering any question, you may choose a different question without any worry.

Will it cost me anything to be in the study?

Your participation in the study will cost you nothing.

Will I receive anything for being in the study?

Yes, you will receive a $ 25 gift card for completing the questionnaire. This is a small gesture to thank you for your time. If you change your mind and decide not to be in the study, you will receive the gift card.

Will you keep my information private? Who will see the information I gave you?

The information you provide will be kept private. We will make sure no one outside the study knows you are part of the study. You will not be asked to provide your name on the questionnaire. Aside from the student collecting the information, the people who may have access to your information are the professor supervising the study, and the office at the school who gave their okay to complete this study.

Also, the student researcher collecting the information will lock your information in a filing cabinet and lock the computer file with a password. He will keep your data for up to 3 years.

What if I have questions?

If you have questions, you can contact the student conducting the research Jean Rene at (347) 370-9215. His email is jeanrene@uwm.edu. The name of the professor supervising the research is Dr. Dietmar Wolfram. He works at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. You can contact him at 414-229-6836. His email is dwolfram@uwm.edu. If you want to know more, you may also call a staff member at the office who gave their ok for this study. They are not directly involved with this research. The phone number for that office, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Institutional Review Board, is 414-662-3544.

Do I have to participate?

You don't have to participate if you don't want to.

By completing this questionnaire, you are saying:

- **I want to participate in this study**
- **I know my participation is voluntary**
- **I understand this form**

Questionnaire instrument

Section 1: Please check <u>one</u> answer for each of the following:

Gender

- Male
- Female
- Nonbinary

Race

- ○ White
- ○ Black
- ○
- ○ Asian
- ○ Other Please indicate: _____
- ○ Two or more races

Ethnicity

- ○ Hispanic/Latino
- ○ Non-Hispanic/Latino

What is your country of origin?

Age

- 18-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60 or older

Income

- Under $30,000
- $30,000-$50,000
- $50,000-$75,000
- $75,000+

Education

- Less than a high school diploma or equivalent
- High school graduate or equivalent
- Some college
- Bachelor's degree or higher

English language skills

What is your level of spoken English proficiency?

- Speak English below the basic level
- Speak English at the basic level
- Speak English at the intermediate level
- Speak English at the proficient level
- Speak English at the advanced level

How long have you been in the United States?

- Less than 1 year
- 1-3 years
- 4-6 years
- 7-10 years
- More than 10 years

If you have been in the United States ten or more years, please discontinue filling out the questionnaire. Thank you for your interest.

Section 2: We value your opinions. Please answer the following questions:

Where do you normally find information?

- ○ Family & relatives
- ○ Friends
- ○ Co-workers
- ○ News media (newspaper, radio, television)
- ○ The Internet or Social media (for example, WhatsApp, Facebook)
- ○ Libraries
- ○ Community centers
- ○ Immigrant businesses (barbershop, hair salons)
- ○ Places of worship
- ○ Other (please specify)

Have you ever visited a public library in the United States?

- Yes
- No

If yes, when was the last time you used a public library?

If no, why not?

Please indicate how often you use public library services.

- ○ Daily
- ○ Up to several times a week
- ○ About once a week
- ○ About once a month
- ○ About once every three months
- ○ About once every six months
- ○ About once a year
- ○ Less than once a year

If you use the public library, how did you learn about public library services?

- ○ Family & relatives
- ○ Friends
- ○ Co-workers
- ○ News media (newspaper, radio, television)
- ○ Social media (WhatsApp, Facebook)
- ○ Other (please specify)

Please indicate how important or valuable public library services are to you.

Have you, personally, EVER participated in an event inside or outside of the library such as a library book fair, bookmobile, or other library-related services?

- ○ Never
- ○ Yes, less than two years ago
- ○ Yes, more than two years ago

If you answered 'Yes'. Please explain how this happened and why you participated.

Has a library staff member EVER visited you, an organization you belong to, a community center, or your workplace?

- ○ No
- ○ Yes

IF yes, when did this happen?

- ○ This past year
- ○ More than a year ago

What was the reason for the library visit?

In your opinion, what is the role of a public library?

What resources or services do you think your public library provides?

When you need information (for example finding a school, health coverage, a job, or anything else), do you always go to the public library?

- ○ No
- ○ Yes

If no, where do you go for help?

How satisfied have you been with the information you obtain outside of the library?

- ○ Extremely satisfied
- ○ Very satisfied
- ○ Moderately satisfied
- ○ Slightly satisfied
- ○ Not at all satisfied

Please explain.

How satisfied have you been with the information you obtain inside of the library?

- ○ Extremely satisfied
- ○ Very satisfied
- ○ Moderately satisfied
- ○ Slightly satisfied
- ○ Not at all satisfied

Please explain.

Please indicate the types of information you look for the most when visiting a public library.

Has the public library always provided you with the information you needed? Please explain.

Do you seek the librarian's help in your search for information? Please explain.

What could the public library do that would encourage you to visit more?

Do you think the public library contributes to your local community? Please explain.

Please indicate any other comments regarding your information need you would like to share.

By completing this questionnaire, you are consenting to participate in the study.

Thank you very much for your time.

Other Information

To claim your gift card, please follow this link: *(a bit.ly address or QR code will be provided).*

Note that your questionnaire responses will not be connected to your contact information.

Gift Card Contact Form

(This was separated from the survey to maintain anonymity through a survey link where this information will be collected).

To claim your gift card, please provide your contact details below:

Name

E-mail Address

Telephone Number

Mailing Address

Please include any other additional comments

.

Thank you for your time. Your answers are much appreciated

Appendix B. Invitation Email, Consent Form, Questionnaire Protocol, and Contact form for Public Librarian Participant

QUESTIONNAIRE INVITATION EMAIL

Dear colleague:

I am writing to request your participation in a survey to understand 1.) the challenges public librarians face while engaging recently-arrived, working-class immigrants and 2.) The information experiences of new immigrants in public libraries. The research is being done by Jean Rene, a doctoral student at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary and all of your responses are anonymous. None of the responses will be connected to identifying information.

As a participant, for you to be part of the study, you must have met those following 3 conditions:

1. You must be at least 18 years old.
2. You must be a public librarian working in the New York metropolitan area.
3. You have provided direct services to immigrants' populations.

If you agree to participate, we will need you to answer those questions. This survey may take up to 20 minutes of your time.

To participate, please contact me. My information is below.

Contact the student conducting the research Jean Rene at (347) 370-9215 or jeanrene@uwm.edu. The name of the professor supervising the research is Dr. Dietmar Wolfram. He works at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. You can contact him at 414-229-6836. His email is dwolfram@uwm.edu. If you want to know more, you may also call a staff member at the office who gave their ok for this study. They are not directly involved with this research. The phone number for that office, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Institutional Review Board, is 414-662-3544.

Sincerely,

Jean

Consent Form to participate in this research questionnaire

What is this research about?

The study is being conducted in order to understand the challenges public librarians face in engaging underemployed immigrants, and the information experiences of new immigrants in public libraries. The research is being led by Jean Rene, a doctoral student at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. We are inviting you to participate. If you have any questions about anything in this form, please contact Jean.

What is a research questionnaire?

A research questionnaire is a form consisting of a series of questions asked to collect information from people.

What do I need to know to decide if I should join this study?

Here are some of the main things you should think about before choosing to join this study. As a participant, you must have meet those following 3 conditions:

1. You must be at least 18 years old.
2. You must be a public librarian working in the New York metropolitan area.
3. You have provided direct services to immigrant populations.

If you agree to participate, we will need you to answer those questions. This questionnaire may take up to 20 minutes of your time.

Are there any risks to participate?

There is no risk to you from your participation in this study. If you feel uncomfortable answering any question, you may choose a different question without any worry.

Will it cost me anything to be in the study?

Your participation in the study will cost you nothing.

Will being in this study help me in any way?

There is no financial benefit. Your responses will help us understand the challenges public librarian face, the role public librarians play in engaging underemployed immigrants, and the information experiences of new immigrants in public libraries. What we learn may help people working in libraries make their services better in the future.

Will you keep my information private? Who will see the information I gave you?

The information you provide will be kept private. We will make sure no one outside the study knows you are part of the study. You will not be asked to provide your name on the questionnaire. Aside from the student collecting the information, the people who may have access to your information are the professor supervising the study, and the office at the school who gave their okay to complete this study.

Also, the student researcher collecting the information will lock your information in a filing cabinet and lock the computer file with a password. He will keep your data for up to 3 years.

What if I have questions?

If you have questions, you can contact the student conducting the research Jean Rene at (347) 370-9215. His email is jeanrene@uwm.edu. The name of the professor supervising the research is Dr. Dietmar Wolfram. He works at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. You can contact him at 414-229-6836. His email is dwolfram@uwm.edu. If you want to know more, you may also call a staff member at the office who gave their ok for this study. They are not directly involved with this research. The phone number for that office, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Institutional Review Board, is 414-662-3544.

Do I have to participate?

You don't have to participate if you don't want to.

By completing this questionnaire, you are saying:

- **I want to participate in this study**
- **I know my participation is voluntary**
- **I understand this form**

Librarian questionnaire Instrument

Demographic

Please check <u>one</u> answer for each of the following:

Gender

- ○ Male
- ○ Female
- ○ Nonbinary

Race

- ○ White
- ○ Black
- ○ American Indian/Alaska Native
- ○ Asian
- ○ Other Please indicate:
- ○ Two or more races

Ethnicity

- ○ Hispanic/Latino
- ○ Non-Hispanic/Latino

Age

- ○ 18-29
- ○ 30-39
- ○ 40-49
- ○ 50-59
- ○ 60 or older
- ○ Prefer not to answer

Language

Do you speak another language beside English?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

If yes, please indicate which language.

Education

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- ○ High school or less
- ○ Associate/Bachelors' degree
- ○ Master's degree
- ○ Doctorate
- ○ Other

How long have you worked at this library?

- ○ Less than one year
- ○ 1-5 years
- ○ 6-10 years
- ○ 11-20 years
- ○ 21-30 years
- ○ 31 years or more

What is your role in the library?

In what ways do you interact with new immigrant patrons?

At your public library, which resources do you use to help immigrants address possible barriers?

Based on your observations, what are the services immigrant patrons use the most at your public library?

Do these services meet the information need of immigrant patrons?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Please explain why?

Based on your observations, which programs do immigrants use the most at your public library?

Do you believe these programs meet the information needs of immigrant patrons?

- ○ Yes

○ No

Please explain why?

What have been some of the biggest challenges or issues with immigrant patrons at your public library?

What services or programs are least used by immigrant patrons but you think might be beneficial?

What are the library or programs services immigrants in your community ask for the most but are not currently available?

How do you learn about the needs of immigrants who come to your library?

What are the barriers in promoting library services or programs to immigrant patrons in your area of service?

What can your library do to promote better usage by immigrants of the public library services or programs?

In addition to English, in which language(s) does your library provide the most circulating materials?

How are you able to help a patron who does not speak English?

What are the most effective ways you have found to help an immigrant patron?

Have you received any training in or outside of your library system in working with immigrant patrons?

○ Yes

○ No

If yes, what types of training?

Were those types of training useful? Why?

What do you think can be done at your public library to promote services that are beneficial to immigrant patrons?

Please indicate any other comments regarding immigrant information needs you would like to share.

Thank you for your participation in this questionnaire.

Recruitment Contact Form

(This was separated from the survey to maintain anonymity through a survey link where this information was collected).

I am hoping to be able to conduct further interviews with a sample of respondents to this questionnaire. If you would like to participate, and are happy for me to contact you please record your contact details below:

Name

E-mail Address

Telephone Number

Preferred method of interview

(Skype, telephone, other)

Best days and times, in general, for

the interview

Please include any other additional comments

.

Thank you for your time. Your answers are much appreciated

Appendix C. Invitation Email, Consent Form, and Interview Protocol for Public Librarian Participant

INTERVIEWS INVITATION EMAIL

Dear colleague:

I am writing to request your participation in a one-and-one interview to understand 1.) The challenges public librarians face while engaging recently-arrived, working-class immigrants and 2.) The information experiences of new immigrants in public libraries. The research is being done by Jean Rene, a doctoral student at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and all of your responses are anonymous. None of the responses will be connected to identifying information.

As a participant, for you to be part of the study, you must have met those following 3 conditions:

1. You must be at least 18 years old.
2. You must be a public librarian working in the New York metropolitan area.
3. You have provided direct services to immigrants' populations.

If you agree to participate, we will need you to answer those questions. This interview may take up to 45 minutes of your time. **The interview will be conducted entirely online,** and at a day and time that is convenient for you.

To participate, please contact me. My information is below.

Contact the student conducting the research Jean Rene at (347) 370-9215 or jeanrene@uwm.edu. The name of the professor supervising the research is Dr. Dietmar Wolfram. He works at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. You can contact him at 414-229-6836. His email is dwolfram@uwm.edu. If you want to know more, you may also call a staff member at the office who gave their ok for this study. They are not directly involved with this research. The phone number for that office, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Institutional Review Board, is 414-662-3544.

Sincerely,

Jean

Consent Form to participate in this research interview

What is this research about?

The study is being conducted in order to understand the challenges public librarians face in engaging underemployed immigrants, and the information experiences of new immigrants in public libraries. The research is being led by Jean Rene, a doctoral student at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. We are inviting you to participate. If you have any questions about anything in this form, please contact Jean.

What is a research interview?

A research interview is a conversation where the researcher asks questions in order to better understand the topic being researched.

What do I need to know to decide if I should join this study?

Here are some of the main things you should think about before choosing to join this study. As a participant, you must have meet those following 3 conditions:

4. You must be at least 18 years old.
5. You must be a public librarian working in the New York metropolitan area.
6. You have provided direct services to immigrant populations.

If you agree to participate, we will need you to answer those questions. This interview may take up to 45 minutes of your time.

Are there any risks to participate?

There is no risk to you from your participation in this study. If you feel uncomfortable answering any question, you may choose a different question without any worry.

Will it cost me anything to be in the study?

Your participation in the study will cost you nothing.

Will being in this study help me in any way?

There is no financial benefit. Your responses will help us understand the challenges public librarian face, the role public librarians play in engaging underemployed immigrants, and the information experiences of new immigrants in public libraries. What we learn may help people working in libraries make their services better in the future.

Will you keep my information private? Who will see the information I gave you?

The information you provide will be kept private. We will make sure no one outside the study knows you are part of the study. You will not be asked to provide your name on the interview. Aside from the student collecting the information, the people who may have access to your information are the professor supervising the study, and the office at the school who gave their okay to complete this study.

Also, the student researcher collecting the information will lock your information in a filing cabinet and lock the computer file with a password. He will keep your data for up to 3 years.

What if I have questions?

If you have questions, you can contact the student conducting the research Jean Rene at (347) 370-9215. His email is jeanrene@uwm.edu. The name of the professor supervising the research is Dr. Dietmar Wolfram. He works at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. You can contact him at 414-229-6836. His email is dwolfram@uwm.edu. If you want to know more, you may also call a staff member at the office who gave their ok for this study. They are not directly involved with this research. The phone number for that office, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Institutional Review Board, is 414-662-3544.

Do I have to participate?

You don't have to participate if you don't want to.

By signing the document, I am saying that:

- I want to participate in this study
- I know my participation is voluntary
- I understand this form
- The researcher has answered all my questions
- I will be given a copy of this form for my own information

I agree to be part of this study:

_____ _____

My name (please print) My signature

_____Date

_____ _____

Researcher name Researcher Signature

_____ Date

Librarian Interview Instrument

Initial questions asked to one-and one interview participants.

How long have you been a librarian?

How long have you been at this branch library?

Do you work directly with immigrant patrons?

How would you describe the ethnic composition of your library service area?

What do immigrant community at your library asked for the most?

What do your say are some of the most important need of your immigrant patrons? How did you learn about those needs?

Would you be able to describe the services that your public library offers to immigrant patrons?

What role, if any, do you play in play in providing services, programs, outreach, or resources for immigrant patrons?

What do you think would be the most helpful resources your library offers?

How do you make the immigrant patron at your library feel welcome?

What additional resources your organization might offer that may make your job easier in helping immigrant patron in your community?

Thank you for your time. Your answers are much appreciated.

Appendix D. Invitation Email, Consent Form, and Focus Group Protocol for Public Librarian Participant

FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW INVITATION EMAIL

Dear colleague:

I am writing to request your participation in a focus group interview to understand 1.) The challenges public librarians face while engaging recently-arrived, working-class immigrants and 2.) The information experiences of new immigrants in public libraries. The research is being done by Jean Rene, a doctoral student at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Your participation in this focus group interview is completely voluntary and all of your responses are anonymous. None of the responses will be connected to identifying information.

As a participant, for you to be part of the study, you must have met those following 3 conditions:

1. You must be at least 18 years old.
2. You must be a public librarian working in the New York metropolitan area.
3. You have provided direct services to immigrants' populations.

If you agree to participate, we will need you to answer those questions. This focus group may take up to 45 minutes of your time. **The focus group interview will be conducted entirely online,** and at a day and time that is convenient for you.

To participate, please contact me. My information is below.

Contact the student conducting the research Jean Rene at (347) 370-9215 or jeanrene@uwm.edu. The name of the professor supervising the research is Dr. Dietmar Wolfram. He works at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. You can contact him at 414-229-6836. His email is dwolfram@uwm.edu. If you want to know more, you may also call a staff member at the office who gave their ok for this study. They are not directly involved with this research. The phone number for that office, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Institutional Review Board, is 414-662-3544.

Sincerely,

Jean

Consent Form to participate in this focus group

What is this research about?

The study is being conducted in order to understand the challenges public librarians face in engaging underemployed immigrants, and the information experiences of new immigrants in public libraries. The research is being led by Jean Rene, a doctoral student at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. We are inviting you to participate. If you have any questions about anything in this form, please contact Jean.

What is a focus group?

A focus group is a small group of people who meet to provide answers to questions and their opinions on a topic.

What do I need to know to decide if I should join this study?

Here are some of the main things you should think about before choosing to join this study. As a participant, you must have meet those following 3 conditions:

7. You must be at least 18 years old.
8. You must be a public librarian working in the New York metropolitan area.
9. You have provided direct services to immigrant populations.

If you agree to participate, we will need you to answer those questions. This focus group may take up to 45 minutes of your time.

Are there any risks to participate?

There is no risk to you from your participation in this study. If you feel uncomfortable answering any question, you may choose a different question without any worry.

Will it cost me anything to be in the study?

Your participation in the study will cost you nothing.

Will being in this study help me in any way?

There is no financial benefit. Your responses will help us understand the challenges public librarians face, the role public librarians play in engaging underemployed immigrants, and the information experiences of new immigrants in public libraries. What we learn may help people working in libraries make their services better in the future.

Will you keep my information private? Who will see the information I gave you?

The information you provide will be kept private. We will make sure no one outside the study knows you are part of the study. You will not be asked to provide your name on the focus group. Aside from the student collecting the information, the people who may have access to your information are the professor supervising the study, and the office at the school who gave their okay to complete this study.

Also, the student researcher collecting the information will lock your information in a filing cabinet and lock the computer file with a password. He will keep your data for up to 3 years.

What if I have questions?

If you have questions, you can contact the student conducting the research Jean Rene at (347) 370-9215. His email is jeanrene@uwm.edu. The name of the professor supervising the research is Dr. Dietmar Wolfram. He works at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. You can contact him at 414-229-6836. His email is dwolfram@uwm.edu. If you want to know more, you may also call a staff member at the office who gave their ok for this study. They are not directly involved with this research. The phone number for that office, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Institutional Review Board, is 414-662-3544.

Do I have to participate?

You don't have to participate if you don't want to.

By signing the document, I am saying that:

- I want to participate in this study
- I know my participation is voluntary
- I understand this form
- The researcher has answered all my questions
- I will be given a copy of this form for my own information

I agree to be part of this study:

_____ _____

My name (please print) My signature

_____

Date

_____ _____

Researcher name Researcher Signature

_____Date

Librarian Focus Group Instrument

Initial questions asked to focus group participants.

Hello and welcome! My name is Jean Rene, and I am a doctoral student in Information Studies at The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. I am glad that you are attending our focus group today. The goal of this focus group is to understand the challenges public librarians face in providing service to recently-arrived, working-class immigrant who may or may not be English language learners. The study is examining the role that public librarians play in engaging this group and meeting their information needs.

Before the pandemic, did you work directly with the public including immigrant patrons at your library?

Tell me about your experiences working with immigrant patrons at your library.

Based on your experience and observation, what immigrant patrons' perspectives of the services of your branch library?

Based on your experience and observation, what are immigrant patrons' most important information needs ?

Based on your experience and observation, what are the most beneficial services for immigrant patrons at your library?

What would make the services at your branch library better for your immigrant patrons?

Are there any services/programs that would benefit immigrant patrons that are not currently offered at your library but that you are planning to offer?

What skills do public librarians need to fulfill their role in engaging with a new immigrant patron?

Is there anything else you would like to add about the immigrant services at your library?

Thank you very much for your time.