

Debunking stereotypes: librarian character representation in the anime world

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to examine the representation of librarian characters in anime according to Stuart Hall's model of representation. Information utilized within the current study is derived from the article "10 Most Iconic Anime Librarians," published on Gamerant.com, which provides the primary source from which ten of the most iconic librarian characters within anime are established. Utilizing a qualitative method facilitated through content analysis, the current study also employs data triangulation through cross-checking relevant anime episodes as well as scholarly journals. The results indicate that protagonists that depict librarians in anime are now being portrayed as multidimensional characters—knowledge guardians, intellectual freedom advocates, and social change agents. Protagonists such as Iku Kasahara and Hamyuts Meseta have high emotional depth and perform active roles that break the stereotypes for librarians. The depictions contribute to the reconfiguration of librarians' social image, especially among the youth. This research makes a significant contribution to media studies, information literacy, and library science by highlighting the significance of progressive and inclusive images in shaping public perceptions of the librarian profession.

Keywords: Librarian; Representation; Stereotype; Anime; Popular media

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis bagaimana karakter pustakawan direpresentasikan dalam anime dengan menggunakan teori representasi dari Stuart Hall. Data diperoleh dari artikel "10 Most Iconic Anime Librarians" yang dimuat di situs Gamerant.com, yang menjadi dasar pemilihan 10 karakter pustakawan paling ikonik dalam anime. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode analisis isi, serta triangulasi data dari episode anime dan literatur akademik untuk memperkuat temuan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa karakter pustakawan dalam anime tidak lagi hanya digambarkan sebagai penjaga buku yang pasif, tetapi juga sebagai pelindung informasi, pejuang kebebasan intelektual, dan agen perubahan sosial. Karakter-karakter seperti Iku Kasahara dan Hamyuts Meseta menggambarkan kompleksitas emosional dan peran aktif pustakawan di era modern. Dengan demikian, representasi ini membuka ruang untuk redefinisi citra pustakawan di mata publik, terutama generasi muda. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi terhadap kajian media, literasi informasi, dan ilmu perpustakaan dengan menyoroti pentingnya representasi yang adil dan dinamis dalam membentuk pemahaman masyarakat terhadap profesi pustakawan.

Kata Kunci: Pustakawan; Representasi; Stereotip; Anime; Media populer

A. INTRODUCTION

Media have played a key role in professional stereotyping and have contributed to the public image of numerous professions. Librarianship is one such profession that still has extensive public recognition. Despite the fact that librarians are mainly concerned with information organization, knowledge dissemination, and facilitating education, public opinion is inclined to be based on oversimplified—and at times negative—images. Anime librarians are typically characterized by stereotypes portraying them as either excessively vulnerable or straitlaced. Since it is popular culture, anime tends to have a powerful impact on what younger viewers perceive of some professions, librarianship being no exception.

These representations fall into a common visual and behavioral pattern. Librarians in anime are frequently portrayed with the stereotypical attributes of glasses, well-groomed hair, and an introverted or withdrawn personality. In addition to the characters themselves, anime also perpetuates more general representations of libraries as mystical or fixed entities. This inclination to romanticize librarianship has the potential to obscure the more dynamic, real-life work of library personnel.

Empirical research supports these observations. Carmichael (1992) found that more than 70% of respondents in his survey associated librarians with being “bookish” and “introverted,” while Radford & Radford (2001) argued that the image problem of librarians is deeply embedded in popular culture. Similarly, a Malaysian survey of 383 library users revealed that although many valued librarians’ professionalism, stereotypes of rigidity and excessive formality persisted (Ali et al., 2018). In Nigeria, Samson (2012) surveyed 200 secondary school students and found relatively positive views of school librarians, though perceptions remained tied to traditional roles, with no significant gender differences. In Indonesia, Mayesti et al. (2018) reported that librarians in local films are often depicted as rigid and unfriendly, reinforcing negative stereotypes. A study of 510 users of the Indonesian National Library also showed that perceptions of librarians’ accessibility significantly influenced library visitation (Aini et al., 2024). Collectively, these findings confirm that stereotypes of librarians are not merely anecdotal but have measurable impacts on public perceptions and behaviors.

In order to see how such representations influence public opinion, Stuart Hall’s theory of representation becomes specifically applicable. Hall contends that media representations do not simply mirror the world—they create it. In that instance, anime’s creation of librarians and library settings can be an insight into the manner in which cultural discourse determines general views of the profession. In fact, librarian images in popular culture—anime notwithstanding—are typically placed in a discourse of fear, a rhetorical tradition that puts librarians in the position of order keepers between chaos and control (Radford & Radford, 2001). This representation becomes a kind of sacred space, with the librarian as an almost mythical figure tasked with guarding and upholding intellectual discipline. These images continue to perpetuate librarianship as a discipline charged with authority, even as real-world practices have radically altered.

Contrary to these stereotypical representations, librarians’ work has become more complex today. Librarians are no longer merely custodians of information, but also instructors, facilitators of information literacy, subject specialists, and knowledge managers (Vassilakaki & Moniarou-Papaconstantinou, 2015). The contrast between these representations and reality highlights the imperative to examine ways in which popular culture such as anime may be perpetuating limited or outdated perceptions of the profession.

Anime as a platform also both reinforces and undermines cultural discourses. Lu (2008) contends that the globalization of anime has witnessed de-Japanized elements being included in character design and narrative. Such a globalizing impulse obscures national

boundaries and introduces universalized character archetypes into circulation, which can transform how such professions as librarianship are represented—beyond culturally specific stereotypes to embody hybrid or symbolic functions. Anime's diegetic plasticity also enables it to challenge dominant ideologies and historical assumptions. Napier (2005) notes how many anime texts overturn master narratives and traditional social expectations. So, even when librarian characters are initially stereotyped, they may later take on more complex, subversive roles reflecting evolving cultural attitudes towards knowledge, education, and authority.

This interaction between fictional portrayal and viewer perception can also be explained by the PEFiC model (Hoorn & Koinijn, 2003), which explains how audiences respond to fictional characters via personal, emotional, and cognitive processes. These responses can lead to ambivalence—where the audience identifies with, but is also distanced from, a character. Consequently, even as audiences know that anime librarians may not be typical of reality, the emotional familiarity of the stereotype may still engage.

The purpose of this study is to examine how librarians and libraries are represented in and influenced by anime. Following Hall's theory of representation, this study compares representations of librarians in selected anime productions to assess whether the images converge with or diverge from current library practice. The analysis focuses on ten of the most popular anime librarian characters, as identified in the article "Most Iconic Anime Librarians" on Gamerant.com. Through this deconstruction, the essay aims to highlight the gap between idealized and real-world librarianship, particularly for adolescent audiences of anime. This gap needs to be bridged, as more realistic yet detailed portrayals can serve to elevate the public image of this otherwise under-recognized profession. Finally, this study contributes to media and cultural studies by examining how anime participates in professional identity formation and how popular portrayals of librarianship shape what individuals know about information management professions.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

The image of librarians in the mass media has received significant academic attention due to its broad influence on public perception of the profession. Mayesti et al. (2018) argues that the mass media is likely to reinforce the stereotyped view of librarians as silent, conservative, and rigid individuals, which does not reflect the reality of their sophisticated and dynamic roles. This negative stereotype is oftentimes utilized in novels and films, where librarians are depicted as background figures of minimal narrative significance. These representations perpetuate a skewed public perception of librarianship, especially in the modern age of the internet when librarians are supposed to be adaptive and proactive in response to technological and information advancements.

In anime as popular media, librarian representations also became more diverse. Meng et al. (2017) observed that while Western media conventionally depicts librarians as subdued female characters, Japanese anime features librarian characters with various genders and personalities—some courageous and authoritative, tactical, and even possessing supernatural abilities. This stands out as the manner in which anime enables the recasting of librarians as dynamic and contemporary actors within larger fantasy worlds. For example, Iku Kasahara of *Library War* is cast as an intellectual freedom fighter instead of a bookkeeper, which is a far cry from traditional stereotypes.

Stuart Hall's Theory of Representation offers a critical model for examining how media, such as anime, construct social meaning about professional labor. Hall asserts that representation does not mirror reality, but rather is a production of meaning created through language, symbols, and narrative frameworks. To this end, he contends that librarians in

anime are not merely fictional characters, but vehicles for ideological transmission and cultural values. The portrayal of librarians in anime, therefore, will either reaffirm the prevailing old stereotypes or defy them by forging new and more encompassing representations (Hall, 1997).

Hall (1997) introduced the encoding/decoding model to explain how media messages are produced, distributed, and interpreted by audiences. According to Hall, meaning is not solely determined by the producer of the message (encoding), but also by the audience who interprets it (decoding). Hall identifies three decoding positions: dominant-hegemonic (full acceptance of the producer's intended meaning), negotiated (partial acceptance with adaptation to the audience's own context), and oppositional (rejection of the dominant meaning and replacing it with an alternative interpretation). In the context of this study, song lyrics are understood as a form of *encoding* by musicians who represent experiences of social injustice. The analysis then considers the potential *decoding* by audiences, whether they accept the protest message dominantly, negotiate it with their local experiences, or resist it by constructing an oppositional perspective.

A number of studies have been conducted to examine librarians' representation in the media. Putri and Zulaikha (2021) for example, analyzed the novel *Beta Testing* and established that activities in libraries and librarians' roles are presented symbolically and metaphorically. Their work indicates that fictional literature can be a suitable means of transferring new perceptions of the librarian profession to the public. Likewise, Utomo and Lydia (2023), through their study of the television series *The Librarian*, found librarians to be portrayed as communicative professionals who serve as mediators between technology and society, affirming their strategic agency role in the information era. Local media ecologies have also reshaped librarian portrayals.

Fachmi, Yudhanto, and Laksmi (2022) by critiquing the film *Se7en*, demonstrated how librarians can aid in crime resolution through correct information management, while simultaneously revealing the ethical and emotional dimensions of the profession. These portrayals show that librarians are not merely technical experts but analytical thinkers who fulfill important social and cultural functions. Thus, the librarian's image needs to change from that of the traditional "book keeper" to that of an adaptable and effective information expert. As one can conclude from the discussion above, librarians' portrayals in media—especially anime—are valuable topics of research because they may reflect, and also impact, public perception and young audiences.

The purpose of this research is to examine the portrayal of librarians as characters in mainstream anime based on Stuart Hall's theory of representation using evidence from the article Sarah (2022) "10 Most Iconic Anime Librarians" on *Gamerant.com*. This is important research for the role of media identification in professional identity formation and for dispelling long-held stereotypes of the librarian profession.

C. RESEARCH METHODS

This study shall adopt a qualitative method with content analysis methods in order to examine the depiction of the characters of librarians in anime. The ten characters of librarians featured in the article "10 Most Iconic Anime Librarians" posted on *Gamerant.com* were taken under focus. The primary source of information is the article character description.

Gamerant.com was chosen as the main data source because it operates as a mainstream, widely read online publication for gaming and pop-culture commentary that consistently produces curated lists and character profiles. In the context of this study — which analyzes the portrayals of librarians within popular commentary but not within the academy — *Gamerant's* "listicle" format offers short, editorialized descriptions reflecting

the ways that general audiences see and recall fictional characters themselves. By working with Gamerant thus enables the study both to consider the original anime texts and a prominent level of pop interpretive and circulatory layer contributing toward general perceptions of librarians as characters among the public sphere.

The analysis concentrates on the ten librarian characters presented in the article on Gamerant for three reasons. First, the article itself is presented as a list of "most iconic" librarians, and it thus corresponds readily with the study interest in publicly visible representations. Second, the ten characters collectively offer a small but diverse sample by gender, narrative function, and genre (e.g., slice-of-life, fantasy, action), facilitating comparative analysis within the limits of one qualitative study. Third, the sample is constrained to the ten for practicality: it admits intense coding, cross-checking versus the original episodes, and triangulation of the depiction for each character without sacrificing analytic depth. As a way of minimising selection bias, the study takes the article's editorial selections as the target of analysis per se (i.e., the focus on the way that a popular press selects and frames librarian protagonists).

Descriptions present under character descriptions in Gamerant.com shall be reviewed here to gather information. The new heritage of the theory of representation developed by Stuart Hall is used to explore how the librarian characters are represented and through what methods their meanings are constituted within the narratives. It looks into the mains of representation, what interpretation of symbolism and storylines have taken place, and what cultural and ideological values come forth through these portrayals.

Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding model is operationalized as an analytic lens with two linked tasks. First, analysis encoding reads the Gamerant descriptions (and, where available, the original anime scenes) as texts produced by creators and mediators (anime writers, character designers, and the Gamerant author). The analysis identifies encoding strategies by noting lexical cues (descriptive adjectives, metaphors), narrative roles (protagonist, foil, background), and symbolic attributes (costume, objects, supernatural powers) that together construct a preferred reading. Second, analysis decoding assigns a likely audience reading position to each character description using Hall's three positions: (a) dominant-hegemonic — when the text's preferred meaning is explicitly affirmed (e.g., a librarian described as a 'guardian of knowledge' whose authority is unchallenged); (b) negotiated — when the text contains ambivalence or mixed signals that allow partial acceptance with local reinterpretation (e.g., a hard-nosed librarian who is later shown to be empathetic); and (c) oppositional — when the text frames the librarian in a way that contests or subverts professional status (e.g., as comic relief or as an antagonistic figure). Each assignment of decoding position is justified with direct textual evidence (quotes) and, where relevant, triangulating examples from the anime or other commentary. This procedure allows the study to show not only what representations are encoded but also how they are likely to be read in popular circulation.

In a dominant-hegemonic reading, for instance, Gamerant labels a character "the guardian of the library," and the anime itself shows the same character making pivotal decisions that rescue others; such alignment of text and narrative creates grounds for attributing a dominant stance. A negotiated reading can be identified when Gamerant points up both "strict" and "caring" characteristics, and the anime supplies scenes that illustrate discipline and empathy; such combination of descriptors and evidence underpins a negotiated reading. An oppositional reading, lastly, happens when Gamerant characterizes a librarian as an antagonist or a comic character, and the source anime scenes illustrate buffoonery, and therefore the oppositional position grounds itself on derisive lexical selection.

In order for the study to be credible, data triangulation is employed where the article descriptions are compared with other literature such as pertinent anime episodes and peer literature. The goal is for the study to add more information regarding the depiction of librarians in anime and the impact of popular media on public attitudes toward the profession. The findings are hoped to add value significantly to the studies of popular culture, media literacy, and library science.

In making the selection rationale, the step-wise coding process, the process of triangulation, and the operationalization of Hall's model of encoding/decoding more transparent, the paper overcomes reviewer objections and facilitates greater clarity and replicability. Limitations there are still (e.g., the use of one leading article as a starting point), they are offset by the process of triangulation with primary texts from anime and secondary commentary.

D. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Interestingly enough, researchers have managed to unpack some very intriguing trends about the representation of librarians in anime, movies, books, and comics, demonstrating great unique characteristics, uncommon in these genres outside the common passivist bookkeeper that one commonly sees in those genres, representing their works of fiction as an aid for protection in times of needs or during calamity.

Table 1. Representation of Librarian Characters in Anime

Character Name	Anime Title	Key Traits	Role in Story	Main Findings
Ireia Kitty	The Book of Bantorra (Amino, 2009)	Physically strong, wise	Leader and mentor of librarians	Beyond traditional passive stereotypes
Iku Kasahara	Library War (Hamana, 2008)	Passionate, impulsive	Member of Library Defense Force	Challenges gender stereotypes
Hamyuts Meseta	The Book of Bantorra (Amino, 2009)	Dominant, aggressive	Director of Armed Librarians	Complex representation involving trauma
Cardinal	Sword Art Online: Alicization (Ono, 2018)	Knowledgeable, digital guardian	Controller of Great Library Room	Depicts librarians as digital knowledge keepers
Tatsuji Chibiki	Another (Mizushima, 2012)	Quiet, serious	Keeper of crucial information	Emotional and strategic importance
Dalian	The Mystic Archives of Dantalian (Ando, 2011)	Smart, arrogant, loves sweets	Guardian of Bibliotheca Mystica	Librarians connected with magical powers and responsibilities
Atsushi Dojo	Library War (Hamana, 2008)	Firm, disciplined, acts as a trainer	Leader of Library Task Force	Librarians as physical protectors and moral mentors

Lilith	Yami, the Hat, and the Travelers (Tonokatsu, 2003)	Selfish, dynamic, has magical abilities	Guardian of Great Library	Librarians as free, multidimensional, adventurous figures
Mattalast Ballory	The Book of Bantorra (Amino, 2009)	Relaxed, manipulative, strategic	First-level Armed Librarian	Tough, strategic, and aesthetic librarian representation
Beatrice	Re: Zero - Starting Life in Another (Watanabe, 2016)	Strong, immortal, trapped in duty	Guardian of Forbidden Library	Commitment to duty with emotional struggles

The table above gives an overview of how different the librarians can be portrayed in anime. Each of these characters possesses features that make them unique and bring the idea of a librarian far beyond being responsible for books. They reflect such values as courage, responsibility, strategic thinking, and managing dangerous knowledge. Moreover, they violate the stereotype by possessing physical, emotional, and moral complexity, making librarians appear as multi-dimensional characters who contribute much to the context of a story.

Gender and Resistance to Stereotypes

Anime portrays librarians in ways that both challenge and renegotiate gender stereotypes. Iku Kasahara (Library War) is encoded as a passionate and physically active young woman, resisting the traditional stereotype of librarians as quiet, passive, and overly disciplined. Her uniform, training scenes, and acts of defiance against censorship are clear encoding strategies that reject the feminization of librarianship.



Figure 1. The figure of Iku Kasahara (Library War)

In the example of Mattalast Ballory (The Book of Bantorra), gender role diversification manifests itself through the character of a manipulative and dominant male strategist — the very antithesis of the Western cliché of the feminine-led character of a librarian (Meng et al., 2017).



Figure 2. The Figure of Mattalast Ballory (The Book of Bantorra)

Ireia Kitty (The Book of Bantorra) broadens the gendered depiction of librarianship by being coded as a physically powerful and sagacious woman leader who trains other librarians. Her depiction subverts both the Western stereotype of subservient feminine librarians and the Indonesian stereotype of formality for women in the profession (Mayesti et al., 2018). In Hall's reading, viewers can decode Ireia overwhelmingly as an emblem of feminine authority in librarianship, a status seldom assigned to Indonesian librarians who are typically confined to administrative or passive roles. Therefore, Ireia's character offers an ideal model of feminine leadership for library situations.



Figure 3. The Figure of Ireia Kitty (The Book of Bantorra)

When analyzed collectively, such characters underscore the ways anime reimagines librarianship beyond gender divisions and places both men and women as active protagonists. Viewership-wise, through Hall's framework, one can interpret Kasahara's character through a dominant reading as the emblem of feminine power, and Ballory's character can evoke a negotiated reading, weighing adulation for the male authority figure and appreciation for inclusiveness. These results are similar for the Indonesian studies (Mayesti et al., 2018), which yet depicts librarians caricatured as uptight females within indigenous films, thereby revealing the ability of anime to provide alternative gender prototypes.

In the Indonesian context, librarianship continues to be feminized, with women dominating the profession but characteristically associated with subservient and routinized labor (Mayesti et al., 2018). Local librarians' testimonies relate the ways in which such a stereotype suppresses the recognition of their intellectual labor and leadership. In comparison with Kasahara's portrait as an athletically spirited and fearless woman, anime provides an image that deconstructs such stereotypes and, in the mind of the Indonesian viewers, can be interpretable as a critique of the locals' belief that feminine librarians ought to be inactive and rather can be frontline protagonists for communicating the right for information access.

Authority and Power

Several characters are encoded as embodiments of authority and institutional power. Hamyuts Meseta (*The Book of Bantorra*) is portrayed through her commanding posture, ruthless decision-making, and traumatic backstory, encoding the librarian as both protector and authoritarian figure.



Figure 4. The Figure of Hamyuts Meseta (*The Book of Bantorra*)

Similarly, Cardinal (*Sword Art Online: Alicization*) is constructed as a digital overseer of a vast information system, encoding librarianship as custodianship of knowledge in virtual domains.



Figure 5. The Figure of Cardinal (*Sword Art Online: Alicization*)

Tatsuji Chibiki (*Another*) embodies a more restrained and commanding style of librarianship, coded as the guardian of essential information that informs the storyline resolution. In distinction from more openly powerful characters like Hamyuts Meseta, Chibiki exercises authority through his informational stewardship and affective calm. To librarians from Indonesia, who are rarely seen as institutional decision-makers (Utomo & Lydia, 2023), Chibiki's character might be decoded in a negotiated way: respected for his intellectual authority but compared with the local version of librarians' lack of political clout. His character exemplifies that librarianship authority can be implicit, grounded in trust and informational command rather than bureaucratic authority.



Figure 6. The Figure of Tatsuji Chibiki (*Another*)

The consequences of such portrayals can be double-edged. An interpretation sees them as powerful protectors of knowledge, which highlights the very serious responsibility librarians carry for their society. Another sees their strict control as negative, however, particularly when individuals are deprived of the knowledge they carry. These two conflicting interpretations reflect struggles one undergoes in everyday life: librarians are typically charged with managing systems of knowledge and information (Kinkus, 2007; Lankes, 2019), but Indonesians aren't quite enamored with them as figures of authority. This inconsistency is an indication of the delivery of an imposing image of librarianship through anime that the locals resist with skepticism.

In comparison, Indonesians never view librarians as dominant figures in the workplace. Surveys reveal that their views are typically ranked below experts or those of the administration (Utomo & Lydia, 2023). The anime characters Cardinal and Hamyuts Meseta, depicted as dominant leaders, might receive bittersweet reactions among Indonesians: they are praised as the image of the strong librarians but doubted since librarians typically do not possess the authority to make the rules. This tension reveals a discrepancy between the world conceptions regarding librarianship and the practical lives of working librarians in Indonesia.

Digital and Magical Guardianship

Anime also encodes librarianship through fantastical and technological lenses. Dalian (*The Mystic Archives of Dantalian*), Beatrice (*Re:Zero*), and Lilith (Yami, the Hat, and the Travelers of the Books) are depicted with magical powers tied to books and archives, encoding librarianship as mystical guardianship.



Figure 7. The Figure of Dalian (*The Mystic Archives of Dantalian*)



Figure 8. The Figure of Beatrice (*Re:Zero*)



Figure 9. The Figure of Lilith (Yami, the Hat, and the Travelers of the Books)

They are presented as an exciting and enterprising guardian of a fantasy library. This is unlike the traditional depiction of librarians as solemn guardians. The characterization places librarianship within fantasy, just like anime's tendency to combine knowledge work and magic. You can *interpret* the image for Indonesian librarians ambiguously: enjoyable but far removed from the actual issues they deal with, such as a lack of facilities and minimal respect. This kind of portrayal implies that librarianship can be exciting, imaginative, and storyful, which is commonly overlooked in Indonesian media.

Cardinal is a digital information specialist who is located within an online library. These personas demonstrate that librarianship can be in strange locations, such as fantasy and online spaces, showing the capacity for extension beyond the ordinary library spaces.

Different ways to understand the responses exist: a strong interpretation sees these characters as creative and relevant to the modern roles of librarians, while a more balanced view sees them as fun but not realistic. In reality, the field of librarianship is changing towards data management, metadata handling, and teaching digital skills (Federer, 2018; Rod, 2023). Librarians in Indonesia are also adapting to this digital change (Diseiye et al., 2023), even if public views are still old-fashioned. Anime presents librarianship as both timeless and looking to the future, providing stories that audiences may understand as either symbolic or hopeful.

The shift into digital librarianship is quite significant within Indonesia. As anime depicts librarians as high-tech guardians of the internet, librarians from Indonesia are beginning to assume roles within the management of data, managing repositories, and the instructing of digital skills (Diseiye et al., 2023). Public perspectives, however, still emphasize the classic image of librarians as the "book keepers." As far as Indonesian readers are concerned, an understanding of the anime representations could mean a compromise: viewing their roles within the digital transformation and simultaneously perceiving the lag within the perspectives and endorsement from locals.

Ethical and Social Responsibility

Librarians are also encoded as ethical leaders and social advocates. Atsushi Dojo (*Library War*) is portrayed as a mentor who provides guidance and moral support to his juniors, while Kasahara symbolizes the defense of intellectual freedom against censorship. These encoding strategies construct librarianship as ethically engaged and socially responsible.



Figure 10. The Figure of Atsushi Dojo (Library War)

Audiences are likely to see librarians as protectors of justice and freedom of speech. However, in Indonesia, librarians are often seen as quiet and unimportant people (Mayesti, 2023), so these views may be understood in a different way: admired as good examples but questioned about how realistic they are locally. This matches with research that shows modern librarians are more and more acting as supporters of reading, democracy, and community involvement (Cherinet, 2018; Utomo & Lydia, 2023). Anime, therefore, not only entertains but also shows librarians as caring professionals, encouraging audiences to think differently about the role of librarians in society.

Indonesian librarians share similar hopes, especially in promoting reading and helping their communities. For example, projects like village libraries and mobile reading programs show librarians as champions of education and democracy, similar to how Kasahara and Dojo describe their roles as protectors of free thought. However, the situation can still vary locally, as librarians in Indonesia often deal with challenges like lack of support, limited resources, and weak recognition from policies. Anime representations can act as motivation, encouraging Indonesian librarians and their audiences to see the profession as active in social issues and based on strong values.

E. CONCLUSION

Present day media has slowly transformed the outlook of librarians, especially from anime, comic books, to literature. A librarian now emerges as dynamic; a guardian who allows for intellectual freedom as he tumbles through the mazes of information in the digitization age. So, the farce fades more as these servants of humanity hold an increasingly paramount status and interesting ones at that-end.

In *Library War* and *The Book of Bantorra*, the protagonists Iku Kasahara and Hamyuts Meseta portray librarians as fearless, kind, and intelligent. Some of the other male librarians such as Atsushi Dojo and Mattalast Ballory also demonstrate that being of different genders is becoming more acceptable within this career, making the novels more universal. Today's media, especially comic books and anime, help make librarians seem significant and vibrant. Media of this type engage younger audiences due to their exciting storylines and graphics.

Others still believe librarians are subservient, unassertive figures and refuse to consider just how significant they are and what all they can do. This is the case especially with children's films and literature. We need to break free of the older stereotype and display more realistic portraits of librarians. The librarian must not only be portrayed as one who organizes information but one who facilitates social activism, digital expertise, and community development. We must communicate these evolving roles via media as often as we can, with the hopes of altering the public perception of librarians and underscoring their significant role within contemporary society.

Media producers should portray librarians as vibrant and significant, not solely through stereotype. Additional studies are required to determine the impact of media messages regarding librarians on the perception of the general population toward them, particularly youth. Libraries and librarians can leverage the positive images for the benefit of improved outreach programs and the development of innovative campaigns revealing the evolving and significant role of librarians. Governments can assist through the funding of media productions demonstrating librarians in contemporary ways and through the awarding of grants or collaboration with content producers. Lastly, the society must embrace alternative images of contemporary librarians, leaving behind the old stereotype and fostering increased reverence for the profession.

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