



# Differences in Information Needs for Reading between Vietnamese and Indonesian Immigrants in Taiwan

Yu-Jung Cheng\* Jen-Chun Chen\*\*

## 【 Abstract 】

This study explored differences in information needs for reading among foreign immigrants from different cultural backgrounds who immigrated to a new country. The study involved a structured interview with 22 Vietnamese and Indonesian immigrants living in Taiwan, and applied a qualitative approach to analyze immigrants' information needs for reading and their experience participating in library reading activities.

The study indicated that Vietnamese and Indonesian immigrants face similar struggles in the process of adapting to daily life and gathering relevant information after immigrating from geographically adjacent areas to Taiwan and that they exhibit several daily information needs for reading. Their information needs for reading can be divided into four categories: language learning, parent-child reading, schoolwork guidance, and leisure and entertainment. This study also revealed that cultural differences lead to different reading information preferences between Vietnamese and Indonesian immigrants.

---

\* Ph.D, Department and Graduate Institute of Library and Information Science, National Taiwan University

Principal author for all correspondence E-mail: ron0816@gmail.com

\*\* Secretary, Department of Economic Development, Taipei City Government  
E-mail: chenjenchun1223@gmail.com

By incorporating cultural differences into library services, libraries can effectively support immigrants and reduce potential conflicts arising from immigration. The findings provide insights for libraries worldwide, enabling them to promote the utilization of their resources and design customized reading services that cater to the specific cultural preferences of immigrant populations. Libraries should consider the unique information contexts of Indonesian and Vietnamese immigrants, as well as the influence of international marriages on reading preferences. Incorporating elements of immigrants' native cultures, such as art, folklore, cuisine, and language, can attract immigrants and facilitate their integration into the new society.

### Keywords

Vietnamese immigrants, Indonesian immigrants, Information needs, Library reading experience, Cultural differences

## Introduction

With the increasing trend of international immigration, multiculturalism and immigration have engendered several effects on and changes in the world. Libraries worldwide strive to provide transnational immigrants with high-quality services and allow them to overcome the obstacles they encounter in their everyday lives. Exchange among various Southeast Asian regions becomes increasingly prevalent. In particular, numerous Southeast Asian women have come to Taiwan through marriage agencies, and such migration is motivated by economic factors. These female immigrants are also called “foreign brides.” They are a part of the bride trade phenomenon: an informal form of cross-border marriage quickly conducted through marriage intermediaries in countries with uneven economic development among regions. Most studies have focused on the relationship between immigrants, capitalism, and transnationalism; nevertheless, research on information behavior and information needs in transnational marriages remains limited (Watkins, 1982; So, 2006; Zare & Mendoza, 2012).

According to official data, between 1987 and 2021, a total of 166,583 Southeast Asian immigrants emigrated to Taiwan from Vietnam, Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, Cambodia, and other Southeast Asian countries. This phenomenon considerably changed Taiwan’s demographic structure and had a substantial impact on Taiwanese society (National Immigration Agency, Ministry of the Interior, 2021). Moreover, most immigrants have relatively low socioeconomic status and encounter daily problems in adapting to daily life, such as language learning, health care, and job applications. Without proper management, these problems can cause immigrants to feel worried and burdened when attempting to integrate into society (Hsia, 2009). Furthermore, immigrants encounter restricted reading opportunities. Southeast Asian immigrant spouses who originally migrated through marriage often confront difficulties stemming from limited language skills, insufficient cultural adaptation, and a dearth of conducive reading environments. Consequently,

cultivating advantageous reading habits becomes challenging for both immigrants and their offspring, impeding their capacity for learning through reading. Consequently, the disparity in learning outcomes between immigrant households and the general population persists and escalates (Wang, 2011).

The makeup of the immigrant population is complex, and their information behavior and need vary on the basis of demographic factors such as educational background, age, gender, country of origin, and family status. Because of these factors, the heterogeneity of the immigrant population cannot be ignored (Caidi Allard, & Quirke, 2010). However, research has mainly focused on determining the differences between immigrants and ordinary people and has rarely determined the cultural differences associated with customs, background, nationality, and race or investigated the different types of information needs and preferences associated with different types of immigrants (Blais & Maïga, 1999; Bilal & Bachir, 2007; Crooks, Hynie, Killian, Giesbrecht, & Castleden, 2011).

Differences in information needs among immigrants of different nationalities affect their adaptation to and integration into their countries of migration. These differences also impose challenges for libraries in implementing multicultural services. Immigrants fulfilling the dual role of worker and family caregiver can be overwhelmed with their daily affairs and work. Developing regular reading habits and the motivation to read can therefore be challenging. Furthermore, immigrants are limited by their language, financial ability, and educational background and can encounter problems when teaching their children to read, which affects the children's reading skills and frequency.

Khoir, Du, Davison, and Koronios (2017) conducted a survey of 170 Asian immigrants who had moved to South Australia and discovered that the immigrants regard libraries as useful places to obtain information and believe that libraries are helpful in their adaptation process. Libraries play a vital role in the acquisition, dissemination, and sharing of information. Public libraries can provide a suitable environment for reading as well as guidance to encourage immigrants to take advantage of a library's resources to learn and increase

reading comprehension. Therefore, the services public libraries provide to immigrants and their children are crucial. Immigrants should have access to adequate information in order to make informed decisions (Sirikul & Dorner, 2016).

Nevertheless, the implementation of services for immigrants in Taiwan did not unfold as smoothly as anticipated. Chen (2014) revealed that these services encountered the challenge of limited effectiveness. Despite having well-equipped libraries, they were not the preferred resource for fulfilling the information requirements of immigrants. Consequently, while devising services for this demographic, it is crucial to consider both the factors that attract them to the library and the reasons behind their reluctance to utilize its offerings. Acquiring insights from theories pertaining to immigrant information needs and behavior can enhance our understanding of the actual patterns of usage among immigrants. This comprehension, in turn, can facilitate the cultivation of positive social interactions between public libraries and the new immigrant communities.

This study explored the differences in reading information needs and library experiences among immigrants of various nationalities. A total of 22 Vietnamese and Indonesian immigrants living in Taiwan were interviewed to investigate their reading information patterns and need. By understanding how they access information resources and their opinions on libraries, public libraries can offer appropriate services that meet the information needs of immigrants from different cultural backgrounds. The study objectives are outlined as follows: (1) understanding immigrants' reading needs; (2) comparing immigrants' reading preferences; (3) summarizing immigrants' suggestions regarding the reading services provided to immigrants by public libraries.

## **Literature Review**

### **Information Behavior of Southeast Asian Immigrants**

With the development of information, communication, and transportation

technology, international immigration has become increasingly prevalent. However, immigrants encounter difficulties when settling in new countries. They face challenges in daily life, including learning new languages, accepting and adapting to different living habits, and establishing a new lifestyle and social relations. Because the information they had obtained prior to immigration no longer suffices to address the problems encountered in their new environment, immigrants may feel that their access to information in the new environment is limited, which produces the phenomenon of information dissonance (Lingel, 2011; Lloyd, Kennan, Thompson, & Qayyum, 2013; Allard and Caidi, 2018). Srinivasan and Pyati (2007) presented the concept of a diasporic information environment, which describes the phenomenon of information confusion after immigrants settle.

Because transnational immigrants may not understand how to efficiently search for information, they often attempt to gather a large amount of relevant and valuable information to adapt to an unfamiliar environment. Access to relevant information allows immigrants to easily adapt to their new life and to make appropriately informed decisions in their new environment. The gaps in information immigrants face in their daily life emphasizes the importance of understanding the information needs of immigrants as well as their methods of gathering and sharing information.

Southeast Asian countries have unique economic systems, religious beliefs, political systems, and customs; therefore, Southeast Asian immigrants display a diverse and complex range of information-seeking and decision-making behaviors. Allard and Caidi (2018) interviewed Filipino immigrants to Canada and found that the majority felt a gap between their expectations and their actual experience. The immigrants experienced feelings of not belonging, alienation, social isolation, emotional stress, and distrust of authority. Sirikul and Dorner (2016) interviewed Thai immigrants to New Zealand and discovered that the immigrants' limited communication in English made them afraid to seek help at libraries. The immigrants grew accustomed to obtaining information relevant to their daily lives through informal interpersonal channels involving their family

members, friends, and colleagues. Shuva (2021) interviewed Bangladeshi immigrants to Canada and confirmed that informal information networks are essential for immigrants. However, research has also indicated that immigrants often receive unhelpful or inaccurate information through their networks, highlighting the necessity of the services public libraries provide to immigrants.

Regarding information behavior and needs, Yeh (2007) applied the Theory of Life in the Round to depict the information landscape of Vietnamese immigrants residing in Taiwan. According to this framework, immigrant women, who confront poverty in their daily lives, encounter barriers in accessing and utilizing information. Paradoxically, traditional values and social norms serve as constraints that restrict their information usage and sharing. Drawing from information poverty theory, it is observed that limited language proficiency among immigrants engenders fear and distrust in their interactions with others, resulting in a passive approach towards information-seeking behavior.

Expanding on the investigation of Vietnamese immigrants, Chen (2014) employed the Theory of Everyday Life Information Seeking. The study highlighted the role of duration of stay in Taiwan as a significant factor influencing the breadth of immigrants' daily life information behavior. In the initial stages of immigration, driven by risk aversion, immigrants actively seek information exchange within their familiar social circles and tend to rely on institutions and experts for authoritative information. However, as their time in Taiwan progresses, their information behavior extends beyond their immediate social network, and their daily lives become more diverse.

Lin (2011) examined Vietnamese immigrants in the greater Taipei area and identified language communication and learning as their primary information needs in daily life. Conversely, research on reading needs and preferences remains relatively limited. Wang (2011) discovered that the reading environment of immigrant families significantly impacts the reading motivation and preferences of the subsequent generation. Immigrant children exhibit lower reading times, read fewer books, and have less frequent reading habits compared to their non-immigrant counterparts.

## **Reading Services in Public Libraries**

Libraries are information intermediaries, and public libraries promote fair access to information for everyone. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization Public Library Manifesto states that public library services must be provided irrespective of race, nationality, or age. Moreover, the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (1994) suggested that public libraries should provide access to information regardless of gender, religion, language, physical and mental disabilities, economic status, or educational level. The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions proposed the inclusion of multicultural books in 2009. The Multicultural Library Manifesto states that all members of the global community possess the right to use library information services and strongly urges that libraries respect the needs of multicultural and multilingual communities. Library information services should prioritize the fair treatment of and fair service allocation to all members of a community without discrimination to foster the harmonious coexistence of various languages (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, 2009).

The National Library of Taiwan created the Guidelines for Multicultural Services of Public Libraries in Taiwan in 2014 as a reference for domestic public libraries to organize services for the community. Public libraries in Taiwan are expected to cater to a multicultural community. According to the guidelines, the roles of the public library are as follows: function as learning centers, cultural centers, information centers, and leisure centers; provide multicultural teaching materials, language courses, and related materials; protect, promote, and value the cultural aspects of a multicultural community, including their traditions, customs, characters, arts, and music; obtain, produce, organize, and collect information needed by multicultural communities for easy retrieval; and provide venues and activities that allow groups in the multicultural community to gather in libraries and engage in social activities (National Central Library, 2014).

Many organizations are engaged in work that helps immigrants to adapt.

Libraries are among such organizations, providing services to immigrants centered around reading. Library resources can form a foundation for education and learning, and the promotion of the library's services can strengthen independent judgment skills and increase domain knowledge (Fisher, Durrance, & Hinton, 2004; Caidi et al., 2010). Dali (2013) argued that reading is a process of cross-cultural encounters and that strengthening the connection between libraries and immigrants can enhance immigrants' understanding of their new country. Libraries promote reading through methods such as book fairs, reading clubs, parent-child reading, reading guidance, and language learning courses to encourage new residents to take advantage of library resources, cultivate an interest in reading and reading habits, and improve reading comprehension (Cuesta, 1990; Khoir et al., 2015).

Audunson, Essmat, and Aabø (2011) studied female immigrants to Norway and found that libraries can contact immigrants and locals during the initial stages of adaptation. Reading materials about the immigrant's new country can alleviate homesickness, encourage them to understand their new environment, and allow them to obtain the amount of information necessary to adapt to their new country. Saricks (2005) emphasized the importance of advisory services for immigrant readers; dialogue between readers and librarians helped librarians understand the readers' experience and needs, allowing them to offer suggestions to the readers to save time and obviate the necessity of searching for books. By helping the readers reduce the time and frustration of searching for books, the librarians helped readers to fully utilize the collection, thereby promoting the dissemination of knowledge.

## **Research Design**

This study applied a qualitative approach to analyze immigrants' information needs for reading and their experience participating in library reading activities. The study involved a structured interview with 22 Southeast Asian immigrants living in Taiwan. The study design incorporated the

recommendations of Caidi et al. (2010), who argued that demographic factors such as the gender, age, nationality, and socioeconomic status of the immigrants should be considered in research. Nationality was used as the main point of comparison to analyze differences in the needs of immigrants. The study respondents were Vietnamese immigrants, who account for the highest proportion of foreign spouses in Taiwan, and Indonesian immigrants, who account for the second-highest proportion.

Purposively sampled Vietnamese and Indonesian immigrants were engaged in semi-structured interviews as part of this study. The selection of interviewees concentrated on key gathering locations for immigrants, such as local government social affairs departments, immigrant centers, libraries, and foundations. Collaborative efforts were made with these establishments to identify individuals who met the criteria and were willing to participate in the interviews. Prior to conducting the interviews, the research objectives were thoroughly explained to the participants, and their informed consent was obtained. For the Vietnamese immigrants, the average age was 39.8 years, time in Taiwan was between 9 and 30 years, and average time in Taiwan was 15.8 years. For the Indonesian immigrants, the average age was 40.75 years, time in Taiwan was between 3 and 20 years, and average time in Taiwan was 12.3 years. Table 1 presents the background characteristics of the respondents.

Table 1  
*Characteristics of Respondents*

	<b>Vietnamese</b>	<b>Indonesian</b>
Participants	N=11	N=11
Age	33-60 (Avg. 39.8)	33-50 (Avg. 40.8)
Gender	11 females	11 females
Education levels	College=4	College=4
	High school=3	High school=5
	Secondary school=4	Secondary school=1
	Primary school=0	Primary school=1

Differences in Information Needs for Reading between Vietnamese and Indonesian Immigrants in Taiwan

Table 1 (Continued)

	<b>Vietnamese</b>	<b>Indonesian</b>
Child	Three child=0	Three child=1
	Two child=9	Two child=5
	One child=2	One child=5
Duration of stay	9-30 (Avg. 15.8)	3-20 (Avg. 12.3)

This study involved a two-stage survey focusing on public libraries and immigrants, respectively. The first stage entailed investigating three regional public libraries in Taiwan (Taipei Public Library, New Taipei City Library, and Kaohsiung Public Library). The libraries were assessed in terms of nationality of immigrants served and reading services provided especially for immigrants. Table 2 summarizes the data on standard reading services offered to immigrants, including parent-child reading, library use, book fairs, lectures, special exhibitions, and book clubs.

The second stage entailed conducting structured interviews with the Vietnamese and Indonesian immigrants. Approximately 5 minutes was dedicated to introducing the research before each interview to allow the immigrants to understand the aims of the research, and the process was facilitated by translators fluent in Vietnamese or Indonesian. The time for each interview was from 30 minutes to 1 hour.

The recordings of the interviews and any notes were retranscribed or translated into verbatim manuscripts. In accordance with research ethics, the interviewees' data were anonymously encoded and processed after translation. The verbatim manuscripts of the interviews were imported into the qualitative research and data analysis software NVivo version 12. The researcher employed a coding scheme to analyze the interview data. The coding scheme was utilized to compare and classify the concepts addressed in the interview transcripts, aligning them with the research objectives. The research concepts were subsequently labeled in accordance with the hierarchical structure of main categories and subcategories.

The collected data were carefully encoded and classified to facilitate analysis and interpretation for this study. In order to enhance the credibility and validity of the research, a pilot study was conducted before the interviews with the collaboration of public library experts who specialize in immigrant reading. Their invaluable feedback and suggested revisions were incorporated into the interview guidelines, aligning them more closely with the research questions. Throughout the interview process, the researcher diligently recorded the interviews in their entirety and transcribed them verbatim. The transcribed data was then shared with the interviewees for review to ensure the accuracy of the transcriptions. Any areas of ambiguity or concerns in the verbatim script were addressed by the researcher, seeking clarification from the interviewees and making necessary additions or modifications to accurately capture their true thoughts and perspectives. This comprehensive approach was employed to faithfully capture the interviewees' genuine thoughts and experiences, thereby enhancing the overall credibility and validity of the research.

Table 2

*Reading Services to Immigrants at Taiwanese Public Libraries*

	Main Reader	Parent-child Reading	Library Use	Book Fair	Theme Lecture	Topic Exhibition	Book Club
Taipei Public Library	Indonesian Vietnamese	●	●	●	●	●	
New Taipei City Library	Burmese	●			●		●
Kaohsiung Public Library	Indonesian Vietnamese	●	●				●

## **Research Findings**

### **Shared Reading Needs for Vietnamese and Indonesian Immigrants**

The Vietnamese and Indonesian immigrants exhibited certain shared information needs for reading in the process of adapting to daily life. The study revealed that the needs can be summarized into four categories: language learning, parent-child reading, schoolwork guidance, and leisure and entertainment.

#### **Language learning.**

Language ability is crucial for reading comprehension and interpersonal communication. Books written in Chinese often include idioms and abstractions that make their contents difficult to interpret linguistically. Consequently, the immigrants expressed a desire that the libraries provide resources that relate Chinese to their mother tongue (such as dictionaries). The immigrants recommended that the libraries offer language learning courses. However, the language learning needs of the offspring of immigrants are completely different from those of the immigrants themselves. Immigrants who grow up in Taiwan and are educated in Chinese do not encounter problems in Chinese listening, speaking, reading, or writing but may wish to return to Vietnam or Indonesia for their careers as adults, which would require them to use their native languages of Vietnamese or Indonesian.

Chinese characters are very complicated, and many tones are challenging to learn. Idioms often appear in Chinese books. If they are only explained in Chinese, you cannot understand them very well. I hope the library can provide suggestions for dictionaries related to learning Chinese. A native language version will be easier to understand.

I think there is a need to teach the children Indonesian. Sometimes I want to teach the children Indonesian, but I do not know how to teach them. When

the children grow up, they may not stay in Taiwan and may return to Indonesia to advance themselves. It is better for them to learn Indonesian.

### **Parent–child growth.**

The study also revealed that both the Vietnamese and Indonesian immigrants expressed a high degree of interest in parent–child reading activities at libraries. Because immigrants fulfill the roles of workers and family caregivers, parent–child reading can provide an opportunity to develop alongside their children by learning together and cultivating mutual affection. Parent–child reading can also encourage the offspring of the immigrants to cultivate reading habits. Many immigrants place their expectations on the next generation. Library programs can guide immigrants through reading picture books, thereby encouraging immigrants and their offspring to grow together.

I like to participate in parent–child activities in the library, and I like to see the interaction between the teachers and children. The teachers tell stories and guide mothers through reading with their children. It is easier for everyone to be in that situation if they are happy.

I rarely read books unless it is to guide the children through reading. Most of the books are pictorial and have a small amount of text. We look at the pictures and tell stories by ourselves and read picture books and tell stories to the children.

### **Schoolwork guidance.**

When the children of young immigrants enter school, immigrants can face difficulties in assisting their children’s language studies and reading because of the specificity of the schoolwork and the immigrant parent’s limited literacy. Immigrants often come from social and economic groups with a relatively low level of education. Immigrant families can struggle in creating an environment conducive to reading, providing adequate resources for reading and study, and affording additional tuition fees. Reading information for schoolwork is

urgently required.

I am also worried about the children's schoolwork. It will be difficult for them to learn English and mathematics in middle school. We have asked parentheses for tuition, but the tuition is costly, and I cannot find free tutoring services and teaching materials. Most of my Indonesian friends were in poor economic conditions in their native countries. After they came to Taiwan, they encountered significant problems in reading. I am worried that the children cannot sustain their competitiveness at school.

Children will go to the library to do their homework, borrow books to read, and select books they enjoy for the purpose of completing their summer assignments.

My child attends after-school tutoring at school, but it comes with a fee. Even regular reading materials require payment, and studying requires a lot of money. It would be helpful if the government could provide more assistance in this regard.

### **Leisure and entertainment.**

Reading materials can help immigrants cultivate hobbies and self-enriching leisure activities, thereby alleviating the troubles of daily life. The content of novels read for leisure is easy to understand. Immigrants read to relax and pass time and are willing to spend money to renew a novel.

I like to read novels casually, but I am usually swamped taking care of the children. Otherwise, I would have time to read all day and forget my troubles. I will borrow a few novels to read during the week.

I prefer Vietnamese novels because I find it difficult to understand very complex books. Even though renting books costs money, I still visit the store almost every week to borrow a few books to read. I also hope that the library can acquire more translated novels or storybooks, allowing me to relax and unwind during my free time.

## **Unshared Reading Needs for Vietnamese and Indonesian Immigrants**

Although Vietnamese and Indonesian immigrants have similar needs, the study indicated that the cultural differences between the two nationalities create different information needs for reading based on religious beliefs and food. Because Taiwan is part of the Han cultural sphere and a broad sense of Han culture also reaches Vietnam, many Vietnamese immigrants to Taiwan believe in Buddhism. Religious beliefs remain a vital aspect of life for the Vietnamese community after immigrating to Taiwan. Furthermore, Vietnamese immigrants often organize Buddhist groups and express more of an interest in reading resources such as Buddhist scriptures than do Indonesian immigrants.

A broad sense of Han culture also reaches Vietnam. Vietnam is geographically close to China and was once regarded as a vassal state of the Qing Dynasty. They had kings, and China had emperors. Therefore, Chinese novels evoke strong emotions for new Vietnamese immigrants.

You can rely on your parents in Vietnam, but no one can rely on you here, so I like to learn about Buddhism and read Buddhist scriptures and stories of Buddha. I often read Vietnamese Buddhist scriptures, but other kinds of books are relatively rare; many Vietnamese believe in Buddhism, so I usually like to read Buddhist scriptures. I go to Vietnamese temples to pray on holidays, where many Vietnamese chant sutras at night.

Regarding the information needs for reading for Indonesian immigrants, the study indicated that Indonesians and Taiwanese have different eating habits: Indonesian cuisine uses many spices, and the flavors are often salty, spicy, and heavy, which differ greatly from Taiwanese tastes. Although Indonesian immigrants marry Taiwanese citizens, their eating habits differ from those of Taiwanese families. Indonesian immigrants must learn about Taiwanese cuisine to prepare meals for the members of their families. Libraries can provide resources for Taiwanese recipes or organize recipe exchanges between different countries, which is of particular interest to immigrants.

Our Indonesian food is more flavorful. It is different in Taiwan. When I first came to Taiwan, my mother-in-law would often read recipes. If the library provided bilingual recipes, I would be interested in using them.

My husband is still accustomed to eating Taiwanese food. I think there should be some activities like cooking classes to teach us how to make Taiwanese food and provide us with a version of the recipe in Indonesian. Otherwise, I will be scolded by my in-laws every time I cook.

## **Suggestions for Reading Services for Immigrants at Libraries**

### **Retaining home culture while adapting to local culture.**

In addition to the various reading needs of immigrants from different parts of Southeast Asia, this study analyzed the immigrants' opinions regarding the promotion of reading services for immigrants. The interviewees insisted on the crucial nature of respecting and maintaining the culture of the immigrants' home countries. They also suggested that reading activities should cater to the cultures of immigrants' native countries and include folktales, nursery rhymes, traditional arts, and unique festivals from their homelands. Immigrants' native cultures can be preserved by organizing activities such as themed lectures, book fairs, film exhibitions, and cultural and artistic performances to allow their offspring to understand the customs and the culture of their native countries and increase their willingness to participate in library activities. These activities can also allow immigrants to adapt to and accept the new cultural atmosphere, thereby relieving the worries of homesickness.

Vietnamese art is also very distinctive. You can make Vietnamese tops and kites, which are not available elsewhere. Also, our Vietnamese costumes, such as robes and hats, are stunning. If they can be incorporated into an event, it will make us feel very comfortable.

Indonesia is many times larger than Taiwan; there is a big difference. It is best to organize an event that can integrate Taiwanese and Indonesian

cultures so that our next generation can also understand and can quickly integrate into their environment.

### **Promotion of reading extends from immigrants to their family members.**

Immigrants often enter the family after marriage. Therefore, the promotion of reading can affect new foreign spouses as well as their family members. The attitude of family members toward reading is related to the foreign spouse's participation in library reading activities. Family members face relatively low barriers to the acquisition of Chinese language and expression skills; therefore, positive family member attitudes toward reading can help foreign spouses' participation in reading activities, which can help them adapt to Taiwan's social life. Reading activity should be promoted not only as a personal affair but also as a family leisure activity. Family reading activities can be planned that allow family members to deepen their understanding of foreigners. The support of the spouse's participation in library reading activities brings the reading habits back to the family and encourages the family members to read and grow together, thereby enhancing communication between the husband and the wife and strengthening the parent-child bond.

Indonesians attach great importance to family values, and we have excellent relationships with our neighbors and relatives. Therefore, for reading, I think we should organize reading activities that the whole family can participate in. If foreign mothers do not know where they can go to participate in activities, they will stay at home with their children and not make progress. If the whole family attends regularly, the child's father will know that library is the right place, and the children will also want to read books when they grow up.

### **Use of information and communication technology to promote immigrant reading services.**

Methods for promoting reading should respond to the constant changes in

information and communication technology. An increasing number of immigrants are reading with digital devices and use social media habitually. Libraries should use social media as a publicity channel to post information regarding library activities, clubs, and groups to increase the visibility of the library services.

I rarely see information regarding activities in the library. Do they not advertise? Or can they promote activities through communication media? Now, most of my friends use Facebook. I think it is better to promote activities through the Facebook community than to send out flyers.

I use communication media to communicate with my sisters in Vietnam. If the library posts its events using these media, I think that many of my friends will want to participate, but I have not seen the library's media group use this method.

## **Discussion**

Empirical research on Vietnamese and Indonesian immigrants can deepen the understanding of their reading habits and their information needs and behaviors. Such research can also help libraries understand and provide services that meet immigrants' reading preferences. The present study indicated that Vietnamese and Indonesian immigrants face similar struggles in the process of adapting to daily life and gathering relevant information after immigrating from geographically adjacent areas to Taiwan and that they exhibit several daily information needs for reading. Their information needs for reading can be divided into four categories: language learning, parent-child reading, schoolwork guidance, and leisure and entertainment. Reading materials for language learning can help immigrants learn the local language and enable their offspring to learn the immigrants' mother tongue. Resources for parent-child reading can help cultivate relationships between immigrants and their children. Reading resources for academic guidance allow immigrants to assist their offspring in schoolwork. Leisure reading resources can help immigrants relieve stress. Libraries function as a communication channel between librarians and

immigrants by promoting reading-based interactions, thereby strengthening the relationship between libraries and immigrants.

This study also revealed that cultural differences lead to different reading information preferences between Vietnamese and Indonesian immigrants. Such reading preferences are based on their religious beliefs and eating habits. Vietnamese immigrants prefer to read Buddhist books and scriptures as a form of psychological support and stress relief. The eating habits of Indonesian immigrants differ from those of their Taiwanese family members because of differences in their home country's cuisine. The Indonesian immigrants have a preference for bilingual recipes, and the provision of such recipes can help them prepare meals that can be accepted by their husbands and in-laws. The study also affirmed that emphasizing immigrants' cultural backgrounds is crucial. Differences in cultural background and values between different countries and races affect immigrants' information needs for reading and inform decision-making. The quality of a library's reading resources also affects the process of adapting to daily life for immigrants. Figure 1 presents the abstract conceptual framework of immigrants' information needs for reading described in this study.

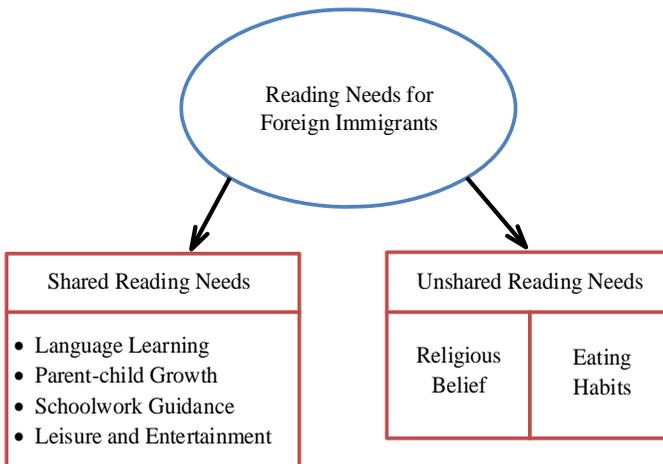


Figure 1 Framework for Research on Immigrants' Information Needs for Reading

## **Conclusion**

The problem of increasing immigration often evolves into fierce conflicts between immigrants and ordinary citizens worldwide. This study explored differences in information needs for reading among immigrants from different cultural backgrounds who immigrated to a new country. The study findings can help libraries around the world promote the use of their information and tailor reading services for immigrants based on cultural differences, thereby decrease the potential conflicts.

This study confirmed that Indonesian and Vietnamese immigrants have different information needs for reading because they encounter different information situations. Hence, differences among immigrants' countries of origin should be considered during the design of library services catered to immigrants. One size does not fit all for immigration. Differences in cultural background for immigrants in international marriages affect the types of reading resources they use. For example, Indonesian and Vietnamese immigrants have different religious beliefs and eating habits. Accordingly, public libraries should analyze and understand the cultural differences and characteristics of international marriages comprehensively and incorporate the culture of immigrants' home countries, such as traditional art, folk tales, cuisine, native language, and Southeast Asian publications, into their activities to attract immigrants. Readers' participation in library activities makes the library a starting point for immigrants in international marriages to adapt to their life after immigration, rather than an endpoint.

Several overseas studies have also frequently explored nationality and cultural differences in readers' reading needs. For example, Lloyd (2014) reported that cultural beliefs influence the information-seeking behaviors of Chinese, Vietnamese, and other immigrants. We also observed that Vietnamese spouses need resources related to Buddhism. This study discovered that Vietnamese immigrants are accustomed to visiting Buddhist temples and participating in Buddhist organizations as an opportunity for an exchange of

information related to Buddhism. Vietnamese immigrants read materials related to Buddhism for various reasons. This phenomenon is similar to Thai immigrants in New Zealand exchanging information, socializing, and searching for jobs at temples (Sirikul & Dorner, 2016) and Korean immigrants in Toronto exchanging information and seeking comfort in churches (Kim, 2001). Libraries can accept culture-related suggestions from immigrants to assist immigrants in adapting to local society as quickly as possible.

Both Vietnamese and Indonesian foreign spouses exhibited a positive attitude toward library reading services. Immigrants suggested that libraries improve their reading services by incorporating the traditions of Southeast Asian countries. The incorporation of their native folk tales, cuisine, and language can increase immigrants' willingness to use libraries. Libraries should also value immigrants, who are both women and immigrants. After immigration, immigrants enter society and the family as housewives and family caregivers. Therefore, increasing immigrants' sense family identity and understanding their needs and experience with reading represents an opportunity to increase the use of the library.

## **Suggestions and Limitations**

Based on the actual research findings, this study provides the following recommendations for public libraries in providing multicultural services to address cultural differences in immigrants' reading preferences. This study recommends that libraries adjust their services by understanding the differences in reading needs among immigrants from different Southeast Asian countries, balancing immigrants' unique needs with those of the general public, and acknowledging the uniqueness of each immigrant's native culture. Furthermore, this study concludes that with the progress of the information age, social media and the Internet have become essential channels through which immigrants seek information. Integrating digital services such as Internet services that are characterized by simplicity, speed, and time-saving features with physical

services to improve the reading skills and cultivate the reading habits of immigrants and their offspring is an urgent task and a challenge for public libraries to address in the future.

Despite the current efforts of public libraries to provide reading services for immigrants, including activities such as parent-child reading, library utilization, thematic book exhibitions, cultural lectures, special exhibitions, film screenings, and book clubs, it is recognized that these services have offered some degree of assistance to immigrants. However, this study suggests that public libraries should consider integrating established information behavior theories and models into their services. For instance, drawing upon the Theory of Life in the Round, it is understood that immigrants may not actively seek or utilize information from public libraries due to feelings of fear and unfamiliarity with external affairs. Therefore, during the service process, public libraries need to focus on reducing the distrust experienced by immigrants and fostering mutual trust.

Furthermore, the researchers argue that immigrants' daily life information needs are not static but rather continually evolving as their duration of stay in Taiwan progresses. Consequently, library services should be responsive to these changing needs, constantly adapting and adjusting their offerings. Looking ahead, it is recommended that future research further incorporates a comprehensive information behavior theory into the analysis, examining and discussing the information usage contexts of immigrants' daily lives. This will enable public libraries to better align their services with the information and reading needs of immigrants.

Although many immigrants immigrate to Taiwan from countries outside of Southeast Asia, this study was limited by time and resources; hence, only Vietnamese and Indonesian immigrants were selected for the qualitative discussion. Future studies should expand the scope of research to include quantitative and large-scale evaluations. The reading information needs of immigrants from other Southeast Asian countries should be investigated, and a more in-depth comparison of immigrants of different nationalities should be

conducted to provide a reference for public libraries to purchase collections and organize tailored reading activities. In addition, this study used only nationality as the background factor for analysis and did not focus on the immigrants' gender. Buchanan and Jardine (2020) studied the information needs of young first-time mothers with low socioeconomic status; they discovered that because women are often part-time mothers and employees, their socioeconomic status is often diverse complex. Accordingly, exploring gender as a background factor represents a worthwhile direction for subsequent studies

(Received on 15 June 2023)

## References

- Allard, D., & Caidi, N. (2018). Imagining Winnipeg: The translocal meaning making of Filipino migrants to Canada. *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, 69(10), 1193-1204. doi:10.1002/asi.24038
- Audunson, R., Essmat, S., & Aabø, S. (2011). Public libraries: A meeting place for immigrant women? *Library & Information Science Research*, 33(3), 220-227. doi:10.1016/j.lisr.2011.01.003
- Bilal, D., & Bachir, I. (2007). Children's interaction with cross-cultural and multilingual digital libraries: I. Understanding interface design representations. *Information Processing & Management*, 43(1), 47-64. doi:10.1016/j.ipm.2006.05.007
- Blais, R., & Maïga, A. (1999). Do ethnic groups use health services like the majority of the population? A study from Quebec, Canada. *Social Science & Medicine*, 48(9), 1237-1245. doi:10.1016/S0277-9536(98)00423-7
- Buchanan, S., & Jardine, C. (2020). The complex information needs of disadvantaged young first-time mothers: Insights into multiplicity of needs. *Journal of Documentation*, 76(6), 1135-1153. doi:10.1108/JD-07-2019-0142
- Caidi, N., Allard, D., & Quirke, L. (2010). Information practices of immigrants. *Annual Review of Information Science and Technology*, 44(1), 491-531. doi:10.1002/aris.2010.1440440118

Differences in Information Needs for Reading between Vietnamese and Indonesian Immigrants in Taiwan

- Chen, H.-L. (2014). A study of life strategies and information behaviors of new female Vietnamese immigrants: Cases of new immigrants services agencies participants in Wanhua District, Taipei (Unpublished master's thesis). National Taiwan University, Taipei.
- Crooks, V. A., Hynie, M., Killian, K., Giesbrecht, M., & Castleden, H. (2011). Female newcomers' adjustment to life in Toronto, Canada: sources of mental stress and their implications for delivering primary mental health care. *GeoJournal*, 76(2), 139-149. doi:10.1007/s10708-009-9287-4
- Cuesta, Y. J. (1990). From Survival to Sophistication: Hispanic Needs Equal Library Needs [and] Sources of Spanish-Language Materials. *Library Journal*, 115(9), 26-28.
- Dali, K. (2013). "Ask me what I read": Readers' advisory and immigrant adaptation. *New Library World*, 114(11/12), 507-526. doi:10.1108/NLW-06-2013-0054
- Fisher, K. E., Durrance, J. C., & Hinton, M. B. (2004). Information grounds and the use of need-based services by immigrants in Queens, New York: A context-based, outcome evaluation approach. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 55(8), 754-766. doi:10.1002/asi.20019
- Hsia, H. C. (2009). Foreign brides, multiple citizenship and the immigrant movement in Taiwan. *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*, 18(1), 17-46. doi:10.1177/011719680901800102
- International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (1994). The public library service: The IFLA/UNESCO guidelines for development. Public library manifesto. Retrieved from <https://archive.ifla.org/VII/s8/news/pg01.htm>
- International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (2009). *The IFLA multicultural library manifesto*. Retrieved from <http://archive.ifla.org/VII/s32/pub/MulticulturalLibraryManifesto.pdf>
- Khoir, S., Du, J. T., Davison, R. M., & Koronios, A. (2017). Contributing to social capital: An investigation of Asian immigrants' use of public library services. *Library & Information Science Research*, 39(1), 34-45. doi:10.1016/j.lisr.2017.01.005
- Kim, A. Y. K. L. (2001). The settlement and adaptation needs of Korean newcomer and immigrant families in Toronto: Pilot study (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from

<https://hdl.handle.net/1807/15970>

- Lin, Y.-H. (2011). A study of new Vietnam immigrant services in Taipei area public libraries (Unpublished master's thesis). National Chengchi University, Taipei.
- Lingel, J. (2011). Information tactics of immigrants in urban environments. *Information Research*, 16(4). Retrieved from <http://InformationR.net/ir/16-4/paper500.html>
- Lloyd, A. (2014). Building information resilience: How do resettling refugees connect with health information in regional landscapes – Implications for health literacy. *Australian Academic & Research Libraries*, 45(1), 48-66.  
doi:10.1080/00048623.2014.884916
- Lloyd, A., Kennan, M. A., Thompson, K. M., & Qayyum, A. (2013). Connecting with new information landscapes: Information literacy practices of refugees. *Journal of Documentation*, 69(1), 121-144. doi:10.1108/00220411311295351
- National Central Library (2014). *Guidelines for multicultural services of public libraries in Taiwan*. Retrieved from [https://www.ncl.edu.tw/periodical\\_305\\_361.html](https://www.ncl.edu.tw/periodical_305_361.html)
- National Immigration Agency, Ministry of the Interior. (2021). *Statistics: The number of spouses of foreign descent and foreign nationality and the number of spouses of mainland China (including Hong Kong and Macao) in each county and city*. Retrieved from <https://www.immigration.gov.tw/5385/7344/7350/8887/?alias=settledown>
- Saricks, J. G. (2005). *Readers' advisory service in the public library*. Chicago, American Library Association.
- Shuva, N. Z. (2021). Information experiences of Bangladeshi immigrants in Canada. *Journal of Documentation*, 77(2), 479-500. doi:10.1108/JD-08-2020-0137
- Sirikul, P., & Dorner, D. (2016). Thai immigrants' information seeking behavior and perception of the public library's role during the settlement process. *Library Review*, 65(8/9), 535-548. doi:10.1108/LR-01-2016-0008
- So, C. (2006). Asian mail-order Brides, the threat of global capitalism, and the rescue of the U.S. nation-state. *Feminist Studies*, 32(2), 395-419. doi:10.2307/20459093
- Srinivasan, R., & Pyati, A. (2007). Diasporic information environments: Reframing immigrant-focused information research. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 58(12), 1734-1744. doi:10.1002/asi.20658
- Wang, P.-K. (2011). *A study on family cultural capital, reading motive and behavior of*

Differences in Information Needs for Reading between Vietnamese and  
Indonesian Immigrants in Taiwan

*Immigrant children among elementary schools in Penghu County* (Unpublished master's thesis). National Taipei University of Education, Taipei.

Watkins, D. (1982). Filipino brides: Slaves or marriage partners? *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, 17(1), 73-84. doi:10.1002/j.1839-4655.1982.tb00725.x

Yeh, N.-C. (2007). Structuration and information behavior: A case study of Vietnamese brides. *Journal of Library and Information Science Research*, 2(1), 81-96.

Zare, B., & Mendoza, S. L. (2012). 'Mail-order brides' in popular culture: Colonialist representations and absent discourse. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 15(4), 365-381. doi:10.1177/1367877911419160

## Appendix

### Interview Protocol

This research was conducted under the title of “One size does not fit all\_ Differences in information needs for reading between Vietnamese and Indonesian immigrants in Taiwan” and to explore differences in information needs for reading among foreign brides from different cultural backgrounds who immigrated to a new country. The research is divided into three components: a background survey, reading needs for Vietnamese and Indonesian immigrants, and Library experience for Vietnamese and Indonesian immigrants.

#### 1. Background survey

- (1) What is your gender?
- (2) What is your age?
- (3) What is your educational background?
- (4) When did you start immigrating to Taiwan?
- (5) Do you have children? How old is the child?

#### 2. Reading needs for Vietnamese and Indonesian immigrants

- (1) How to learn the language when you immigrate to Taiwan? Do you read books or other learning materials?
- (2) How often do you reading? Do you have any reading preferences?
- (3) Do you encounter any difficulties while reading?
- (4) Compared with other countries, what are the characteristics of Vietnamese and Indonesian immigrants while reading?

#### 3. Library experience for Vietnamese and Indonesian immigrants

- (1) Have you ever been to the library? How do you feel about library reading services in Taiwan?
- (2) What Vietnamese or Indonesian characteristics do you think can be incorporated into the library reading services?
- (3) Could you please provide suggestions for promoting the immigrant's library reading services?



# 臺灣越南籍與印尼籍新移民閱讀資訊 需求之比較研究

鄭有容\* 陳振鈞\*\*

## 【摘要】

本研究旨在探討來自不同文化背景的新移民在閱讀方面的資訊需求差異，針對居住在臺灣的 22 名越南籍和印尼籍移民進行訪談，並運用質性方法分析移民在閱讀資訊需求以及參與圖書館閱讀活動時的經驗。研究結果顯示，越南籍和印尼籍移民至臺灣後，呈現出多樣的閱讀資訊需求，可歸納為語言學習、親子閱讀、學業指導以及休閒娛樂 4 個類別。研究也進一步揭示文化差異對越南籍和印尼籍移民的閱讀資訊偏好造成的影響，建議將移民的本土文化元素（例如藝術、民間傳說、美食和語言）納入公共圖書館服務中，吸引移民並促進其在新社會中的融入。

## 關鍵詞

越南籍移民 印尼籍移民 資訊需求 圖書館閱讀經驗 文化差異

---

\* 國立臺灣大學圖書資訊學系暨研究所博士  
通訊作者 E-mail: ron0816@gmail.com

\*\* 臺北市政府產業發展局局長機要秘書  
Email: chenjenchun1223@gmail.com