

Interpretation of Soft Skills in Archives

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ABSTRACT

To meet the demands of the workplace, archivists need to understand how soft skills develop. Digital technology development is a task that needs to be accelerated right away. This article attempts to discuss the findings of studies on how archivists work from home (WFH) during the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia led to developing soft interpretative skills. A case study approach was employed in this descriptive qualitative research. Questionnaires and interviews were used as the primary data-collecting methods for samples from the local government, the business sector, and ANRI. The findings demonstrated that the perception of soft skills has evolved into an implicative function rather than a meaning-based one. Based on the study's findings, it was determined that soft skills provide an essential and crucial purpose, precisely the demand for digital literacy. It was also determined that the implementation of WFH during the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the use of digital literacy abilities.

Keywords: Archives; digital literacy; soft skills

1. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 outbreak has significantly changed the workplace. Indonesia did not enforce a lockdown, but the directive stopped a number of routine communal activities. Regulations are established by the government, particularly those governing office work. For both public and private institutions, working from home is an unavoidable option. It is well known that the work-from-home system offers great levels of flexibility to help employees' efforts to balance work and other facets of their lives. Certain circumstances, such as natural disasters, virus outbreaks, or causes that force workers to work from home as one of the ways to stop the spread of the COVID-19 virus, demand it occasionally.

The era of digital disruption is marked by the rapid development of communication technology. Many modern companies have offered work from home to their employees as a new work system. The system works remotely by relying on technology such as laptops, mobile phones, and the internet, which has several advantages and benefits for the company. Work-from-home practices have flaws and inadequacies, such as the inability to

monitor employees' performance, security issues with data transfers, communication issues when there are issues at work, and cultural adjustment issues. It must also be a concern because it turns out that not all types of work are suitable for this new system (Utami, 2020).

The results of Flexjobs research in the US showed an increase in WFH of up to 159% from 2005 to 2017. The COVID-19 pandemic has made working from home the choice of many companies to keep their business running. Still, as the economy starts to move, many companies want to make the system work remotely as a permanent work system. In a Gartner survey, it was found that 74 percent of CEOs in the US expect workers to work remotely even after the Covid-19 pandemic. Money.usnews, Monday (20/7/2020), explained the skills employees need to be able to implement WFH, including; remote technology skills utilization such as tool features such as FaceTime, Zoom, Skype, and other technologies, displayed via video, self-motivation to stay productive and focused, collaborative skills by utilizing technologies such as Slack, Skype, Google Docs in working as well as solving problems and negotiate or be creative with other coworkers. It is also expected to have enough digital references (Catriana, 2020).

Working from home is one of the flexible work alternatives, which also includes time and location-related considerations. In the workplace, flexible work arrangements are frequently used, particularly in industrialized nations. Some jobs in the public sector do not necessitate daily employee attendance at the workplace. If there is coordination between employees and management through the management of human resources in integrated talent management based on information technology and the availability of good work facilities and infrastructure, computer facilities connected to the internet connection, the application of working from home within the framework of flexibility will run successfully.

Archives play a significant part in the sustainability of business operations across all lines of businesses, agencies, and institutions, both public and private, and the profession of archivist managing archives is synonymous with service. Is the archivist profession handling the soft skill archives to meet the demands of the modern workplace? With the advancement of technology and the workplace, so has the interpretation of soft skills in the field of archives. The answer proposed is to look deeper into the understanding of archive soft skills to overcome this obstacle and observe what is happening in the field. The findings from the interpretation of soft skills have evolved an implicit function where one critical function is required across all areas, namely the need for digital literacy abilities. These findings are no longer restricted to historical functions and meaning functions. These soft skills can be seen clearly in the implementation of working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic. Digital literacy competencies were accelerated during this pandemic (Zhou et al., 2020).

According to The United Nations (UN) agency responsible for global measurement of the adoption of information and communication technologies (ICTs), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), defines digital skills for the world's population in terms of their alleged outcomes: "the ability to use ICTs in ways that help individuals achieve beneficial, high-quality outcomes in everyday life for themselves and others" and that "reduce the potential harm associated with ICT use" (ITU, 2022). In this matter, It serves the various and varied interests of its members, including the majority of the world's nations and numerous public and private sector stakeholders, who strive to flourish and compete in the digital era while also achieving the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations (SDGs). But different countries have different laws. As a result, studies are looking into whether and how developing digital skills can aid in the implementation of e-government

initiatives, reskilling workers for a changing labor market, encouraging domestic adoption of digital consumer goods and services, and, most recently, assisting citizens in locating and evaluating reliable information regarding politics, health, and finances (Livingstone et al., 2021). By using digital technology to facilitate the completion of tasks and jobs, archivists are attempting to gain better digital technology usage experience (Rachmaningsih & Wijayanti, 2021).

This research aims to explain the interpretation of soft skills that has already been developed by adding the understanding of soft skills in implicative function and the significance of this new interpretation of soft skills for students and lecturers in information management archivists and vocational program. The study's findings should inspire interest in the archiving profession to keep up with the work place. Universities can also help students develop these soft skills competencies, particularly in Indonesia's archival vocational education.

2. METHODS

The research is described descriptively and employs a case study approach. The case studies that will be investigated are based on the COVID-19 pandemic, during which time the workplace culture altered and many public and private organizations implemented work from home practices. Direct interviews with archivists from the representative groups of their respective agencies were used to collect data for the online form. The study had a total of 8 participants: four archivists from ANRI, the local government of Wonogiri, LPS, and KAI. Each archivist represents a diverse institutional background, including the national archive, regional archives, archivists in BUMN, archivists in private institutions, and one more participant each from the Open University, Padjajaran University, Gadjah Mada University, and Brawijaya University.

On July 4, 2020, data was gathered through a virtual focus group discussion (FGD) to further the outcomes of the online interview. Three components of data analysis utilizing the Miles and Huberman approach are data reduction, data presentation, and data processing's conclusion (Matthew B Miles et al., 2020). Data reduction was implemented to categorize data through focusing and selection. The study used tables to provide the data before the justification and conclusion. The idea of interpretation functions from Jorge J. A. Garcia is mentioned in the discussion of the research findings (Gracia, 1995). The interpretation function consists of historical, meaning, and implicative functions (Annibras, 2016).

3. RESULTS AND FINDINGS ANALYSIS

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected all paces of life, including how people work. People are urged to work from home as the state requires public health restrictions to stop the spread of COVID-19. Companies, agencies, and private and public institutions are forced to make regulations related to supervising work. Working from home is the only option that must be implemented during the pandemic. Workplaces are forced to adapt technologically and culturally to implement WFH immediately. On the other hand, Flexible Work Arrangements (FWA) are not new to the world. Factors affecting employee utilization of flexible work arrangements (Lambert et al., 2008).

The shift in work culture appears to have occurred due to the regulation during the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although working from home seems to be a recent trend globally, several professions have been doing it for decades. Flexible Work Arrangements are Deconstructing Flexibility (Allen et al., 2013). In recent years, the change

in workplace culture will be more apparent. The field of managing archives (archivist) is likewise affected by this situation. All agencies or organizations use archives extensively. Hence, archivists need to adjust to the demands of soft skills in the workplace. Exceptional service must nonetheless be offered within the restrictions imposed by the law. Space and time are no longer constraints for remote meetings, indirect archive services, archive tracking employing communication technology devices, digital monitoring, systematic delegation, and teamwork. The workplace is increasingly adopting this culture. Soft skills are necessary in the workplace for archiving and information specialists. Referring to Jorge J .A. Gracia, there are three interpretations: the historical function, the meaning function, and the implicative function. The results of the analysis are described as follows.

Table 1. Informative description

Historical Functions	Analyze	Developing Implications of Soft Skills
Understanding Soft-Skills	Soft Skills Needs in the Conventional Workplace	Needs in WFH Implementation
Communication and Interaction Skills	Interpersonal Communication, Public Speaking (Rhetoric and presentation)	Need Digital skills for long-distance communication (Video Call, Meeting/ teleconference, remote presentation)
Leadership	Effective communication for Direction and Supervision	Effective communication through digital media to conduct remote direction and supervision
Coordination and cooperation	Effective Coordination and Cooperation	Need Digital skills for long-distance coordination and cooperation
Self-motivation	Time management, task completion, optimization of results	Need digital skills to complete tasks and optimize results
Design	Design skills	Need the ability to design with digital applications (making ppt. and video or content)
Creativity and innovation	Critical thinking, problem-solving	Get communication technology and technology applications to complete tasks and solve problems, develop ideas and creativity

In the historical function, theoretically and conceptually, soft skills are a form of ability to relate, communicate, and interact with other people well to create effective communication in the world of work so that they can complete tasks and work well and on target. Employees should be able to use rhetoric as much as possible to meet the need for public speaking and presentations, especially if they are in a position as a leader or supervisor. To meet the conditions in the work of archivists or graduates of the Archives Program, one must equip themselves with the ability to lead, coordinate, cooperate, be self-motivated, be creative, and be innovative. At the next level, they will also be asked to have the ability to design, think critically, and solve problems.

In the meaning function, the interpretation of soft skills in the conventional workplaces in Indonesia, as shown in Table 1, is following the understanding and concept of soft skills itself; effective communication for public speaking, leadership, coordination, cooperation, managing work, and time for self-motivation. Further develop the need for critical thinking for creativity, innovation, and problem-solving, as well as the ability to make designs.

Meanwhile, in the implicative function, the mindset of the archiving profession must change. The definition of soft skills changed and evolved throughout the disruption age,

amplified by triggers brought on by the application of WFH during the COVID-19 pandemic. Communication and interaction skills will be effective if equipped and supported with digital literacy skills, following the concept of 7 soft skill competencies according to Tony Wagner (Widarto, 2012).

The archiving profession fails the market's whims. Some companies find it difficult to find people who can think critically and are able to make smooth transitions at work. This is suspected because the archival management profession is a practitioner, where education regulations in Indonesia place archival education in Diploma IV (vocational) programs.

In the development of industry 4.0, many things are automated, including the internet of things, and digitalization. Soft skills include interpersonal skills, global thinking, and media and information literacy (Lase, 2019). Furthermore, improving personal competence and literacy is necessary to be actively involved in the revolution (Rahman et al., 2019). The Literacy Era 4.0 is marked by a situation where it is no longer enough to rely on old literacy such as reading, writing, and mathematics but also must understand literacy in the industrial revolution era 4.0 which includes data literacy, technological literacy, and human literacy (Dewi et al., 2019). The interpretation of archiving soft skills is developing, and employers complain that local university graduates cannot apply theory into practice (especially in line with the development of digital media technology).

According to the findings of the study based on interviews with the participants, it was possible for higher education institutions to arise even though most of them lacked appropriate job experience in the archival sector. Because there is still an issue with the competencies of college graduates and the abilities required in the sphere of employment, the quality of graduates is presented on the acceptability of users (users/stakeholders). The interview questions mainly concentrated on understanding soft skills, stakeholder needs for soft skills, and desired soft-skills competencies for archivists concerning the use of digital technologies. Table 2 displays more data analysis findings.

Table 2. Result analysis

Problem	Analysis Results
Understanding of soft skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree, ability to communicate and interact, cooperate coordinate, leadership and attitude, and behavior. • Agree, that the era of disruption of soft skills is also determined by the ability to use digital technology in communicating and interacting • Opinions, soft skills are how to communicate and interact, this is not taught in college • Opinions, soft skills are obtained through experience
Soft skills of archival needed by stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opinions, mastery of digital technology in addition to still needing to master conventional technology because the archiving field will continue to use both types of technology • Opinions, mastery of digital technology must be • Opinions, Mastery of digital technology in all lines
Soft-skill competencies that are expected to be obtained from the use of digital technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opinions have digital capabilities • Opinion, synchronization of technology and theory, ability to manage modern archives, able to apply automation • Opinions, have experience both as an organizer and in the community in managing and utilizing digital technology
Suggestions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development of tools in lectures to transform humans 2. The use of digital technology is starting to be applied in every lecture through assignments, projects, and scientific reports

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3. Update problems in modern archival teaching and knowledge
 4. Experience improvement by organizing and going directly to the community
 5. Do not abandon technology but combine it with digital technology as needed in managing archives
 6. Development of critical and creative thinking
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All participants agreed that digital literacy is a necessary soft skill for archivists. The interpretation of soft skills has developed and is increasingly visible due to the pandemic. The archivist profession or archival information manager is related to document management and distribution, so the profession certainly has digital literacy. Digital literacy will be part of the soft skills that the archival information management profession must have. Regardless of whether there is no pandemic condition, in the future, working from home, working from the office, or working from anywhere will be a new challenge for the world of archivists. Sooner or later, they must be able to adapt to the evolving interpretation of soft skills. This necessity must be in line with the archivist's mindset.

It seems now that appropriate soft skills play an essential role in a successful career and during social interactions. These skills are also highly sought after by employers recruiting fresh graduates. According to Majid et al. (2012), most students either agreed or strongly agreed with the statements that soft skills were essential for career advancement, highly sought after by employers, and for getting a better job. Half of the participants agreed with the suggestion that soft skills are difficult to learn compared to professional knowledge and skills. On the contrary, most respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that soft skills cannot be enhanced through practice and that these skills were not as necessary as professional knowledge and skills. This indicates that students have a good understanding of the importance and value of soft skills. How do students perform these soft skills in Indonesia, particularly those enrolled in vocational courses?

Hard and soft skills are necessary for success in career and life, and no one denies it. Hard skills deal with technical proficiency. Soft skills relate to personal values that determine a person's ability to adjust and work in a particular situation. To make hard skills applicable, people need soft skills. Soft skills will help an individual to make the work efficient and more productive. Thus, soft skills can predict success in life (Beena Johnson, 2021; Heckman & Kautz, 2012).

Digital technology developed in this era deeply affects organizational models and management systems. It is about the overall improvement of ways of working and the efficiency of an organization. Next digital transformation has become an integral part of organizations pursuing growth, expansion, quality, and sustainability, due to some of the skills required to manage digital transformation successfully. A successful digital transformation initiative is needed to ensure they are ready to embrace disruptions and fill skills gaps in their organizations (Gulati et al., 2020).

The digital transformation of businesses and the working world has revolutionized the role of the digital working environment within organizations. Consumer or client behavior has also fundamentally changed, affecting requirements for service, marketing professionals, or coordinating and collaboration. Therefore, new hard and soft skills are needed to succeed. In digital working, basic soft skills are increasingly becoming more valued by employers and are relevant factors affecting employability. Vocational graduate students, especially in archivist programs, must develop appropriate skills to succeed in their careers and have the right balance of skills (Kovacs, 2021).

4. CONCLUSION

Along with the advancement of digital technology, the archivist profession is facing challenges in the workplace. In keeping with the interpretation of soft skills that are emerging, the phenomenon of the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak is one of the reasons that encourage changes in workplace culture. For archivists to fully understand the value of literacy, a soft skill they must possess, it is crucial to enhance their interpretation of soft skills. Historical, meaning, and implicative functions are all part of soft skills interpretation.

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