



The role of assertive behavior in conflict resolution and negotiation among Generation Z librarians

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Abstract

Background: Librarians are required to be assertive amid changing times and the dynamics of Generation Z, which is beginning to dominate the workplace. Assertive behavior is a communication skill that can be learned to reduce conflict. Studies on the application of assertive behavior among Generation Z librarians are still limited; therefore, research is needed to fill this gap.

Purpose: This study aims to identify the assertive behavior of Generation Z librarians in conflict resolution and negotiation within library settings, using Janette S. Caputo's theory. The main research question is: How do Generation Z librarians apply various forms of assertive statements in the context of library service interactions?

Methods: This study utilizes a descriptive qualitative approach. Informants were determined using purposive sampling based on several criteria, and nine informants were obtained from school libraries (SMPN 29 Bandar Lampung, SMKN Padang Cermin, SD Kreativa, SMK Muhammadiyah 3 Metro), universities (Universitas Bhayangkara Jakarta Raya, Institut Sains Teknologi Nasional, and Politeknik Kesuma Bangsa), and public libraries (Kabupaten Pringsewu and Kabupaten Pesisir Barat). Data collection was carried out through structured interviews.

Results: The study reveals that Generation Z librarians exhibit various forms of assertive behavior. They demonstrate Simple Assertion by facilitating effective information retrieval. Empathetic Assertion is shown through adjustments in communication styles. Soft Assertion appears in the form of support, positive feedback, and appreciation toward coworkers. Anger Assertion is expressed professionally. Confrontation Assertion is reflected in polite renegotiation of work agreements. Negative Assertion involves acknowledging mistakes and maintaining healthy communication. Assertive Disengagement is demonstrated by postponing discussions assertively when conditions are unsuitable.

Conclusions: Generation Z librarians apply various forms of assertive behavior in conflict resolution and negotiation in libraries.

Keywords:

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Conflict resolution
Generation Z
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INTRODUCTION

Effective communication skills are an essential element in managing interactions within a library environment, and one skill that can be learned to reduce potential conflicts is assertive behavior. This behavior enables individuals to communicate honestly, openly, and respectfully while valuing the views and feelings of others (Hikmah et al., 2023). Being assertive means choosing a positive and proactive attitude while remaining willing to compromise to achieve mutually beneficial results (win-win solution) (Al Kabbani & Dalati, 2025). Recent studies have demonstrated that assertiveness plays a crucial role in mitigating workplace stress and enhancing professional performance, particularly in service-oriented professions (Lulu & Selamat, 2025). This behavior is important in various professions, including librarians who interact directly with service users (Maulana & Nurhayani, 2023).

Library services do not only focus on providing information but also require the ability to manage conflicts through strategies or negotiations between librarians and users to maintain harmony and mutual respect (Rizky & Masruri, 2023). Librarians must communicate effectively and behave assertively to manage conflicts and maintain a pleasant atmosphere in the library (Supriati et al., 2024). In addition, negotiation skills help achieve solutions that satisfy all parties (Setiawati, 2023). Contemporary research emphasizes that effective conflict management strategies, including mediation and negotiation, are essential for fostering harmonious work environments and enhancing employee

satisfaction (Maniendaran et al., 2025; Munduate et al., 2022). Thus, an assertive approach becomes a crucial foundation for librarians in managing conflicts and conducting negotiations effectively, as it enables communication that is clear, polite, and oriented toward problem-solving (Shutadi et al., 2025).

Librarians with high competence have a significant influence on work performance, career satisfaction, and perceived suitability (Sungadi, 2021). Breakthroughs in the era of disruption that librarians can make in responding to change include adapting to ongoing developments (Rahmawati, 2024). Professional librarians who possess knowledge, intelligence, and emotional stability are also highly valued in the workplace (Lestari, 2023).

One generation that is beginning to enter the workforce is Generation Z—those born between 1996 and 2010. Each generation consists of individuals with unique opinions, values, behaviors, and plans for the future. Generation Z is known for enjoying work, shopping, and socializing online (McKinsey, 2024). They also seek meaningful work that aligns with their interests (Waworuntu et al., 2022).

The application of effective assertive communication has a significant impact on the performance of members or employees, especially Generation Z, who have unique characteristics (Laksana et al., 2024). Adaptability is key for Generation Z to face challenges and seize opportunities in the digital age. With their digital native skills, they have great potential to become pioneers in the application of innovative and responsible technology in the workplace (Tobing et al., 2025). Furthermore, studies

have shown that emotional intelligence and assertiveness are interconnected competencies that significantly influence workplace outcomes, including conflict resolution effectiveness and interpersonal success (Mamata & Kavilal, 2025; Shooli et al., 2025). Therefore, research on assertive behavior is very important in the context of conflict resolution and negotiation for Generation Z librarians.

There have been many studies on the assertive behavior of librarians, such as those conducted by Lisa Darmayanti, et al (2024), which show that high assertive behavior will have an impact on high service quality, whereas low assertive behavior indicates low service quality. Salmah (2023) also stated that a conducive and friendly library can be created by having assertive librarians who respect and are committed to maintaining relationships with other individuals. Farhan, et al (2023) concluded that librarians at the Rohiquil Ilmi Village Library used assertive communication patterns in serving library users and that librarians were able to express their opinions, thoughts, and ideas.

Although these three studies have provided important insights, there are still gaps. Previous studies have shown a positive relationship between assertive behavior and service quality. Most studies still focus on the assertive behavior of librarians in general without specifically examining Generation Z librarians. Therefore, research on the assertive behavior of Generation Z librarians is urgently needed to fill this gap.

The theory used in this study is the seven assertive statements according to Janette S. Caputo, which consist of Simple Assertion, Empathetic Assertion, Soft

Assertion, Anger Assertion, Confrontation Assertion, Negative Assertion, and Assertive Disengagement (Caputo, 1984). These seven statements provide a framework for analyzing how Generation Z librarians communicate in work situations that demand a balance between assertiveness and politeness, especially when dealing with negotiations and conflict resolution in the library environment.

Considering this research gap, this study aims to describe in depth how Generation Z librarians apply various forms of assertive statements in the context of library service interactions. This study examines how they use simple assertions when helping to meet users' information needs, as well as how they apply empathetic assertions when dealing with users or colleagues who are in certain emotional states. This study also examines how soft assertions manifest themselves in the form of support and appreciation in the workplace, as well as how they express dissatisfaction ethically through anger assertions. In addition, this study examines how Generation Z librarians reaffirm their commitment or work responsibilities through confrontation assertion, how they acknowledge mistakes and maintain positive communication through negative assertion, and how they politely delay or rearrange conversations through assertive disengagement. This overall focus is important for understanding the communication characteristics of the new generation of librarians and their impact on conflict resolution and negotiation in libraries.

The urgency of this research lies in the need to understand the unique assertive behavior of Generation Z librarians in

the context of conflict resolution and information service negotiation. The purpose of this study is to identify the assertive behavior of Generation Z librarians in conflict resolution and negotiation in libraries. In addition, this study is expected to serve as a basis for evaluation, training strategy development, and service quality improvement in libraries. Thus, the results of this study can contribute to human resource management in libraries.

RESEARCH METHODS

The approach used in this study is descriptive qualitative research. Qualitative research is an approach used to explore and understand the meaning of data obtained from individuals or groups involved in social and humanitarian issues (Rofiqoh & Zulhawati, 2020). A qualitative approach is considered appropriate since assertive behavior, conflict resolution, and negotiation involve subjective experiences, communication patterns, and personal interpretations that cannot be adequately captured through quantitative

measurement. Determination of informants using purposive sampling, i.e., determining based on specific characteristics, traits, and qualities that correspond to the characteristics of the population (Tersiana, 2022). Informants in this study had the following characteristics: Librarians born between 1996 and 2010 (Generation Z); Have been a librarian for at least 6 months; Librarians are graduates of library science; Willing to become an informant. From these criteria, nine informants were selected and presented in Table 1.

The object of the research is the assertive behavior of Generation Z librarians in the context of conflict resolution and negotiation within library services.

This research was conducted using structured interviews. Interviews were conducted to gather data through questions and answers between researchers and informants (Tersiana, 2022). Structured interviews were chosen to ensure consistency of questions while still allowing informants to explain their experiences in detail. Informants were selected using purposive sampling based on predetermined criteria

Table 1. Research Informant Data

| No. | Initial in this article | Name of Library | Length of Service |
|-----|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | Informant 1 | SMK Muhammadiyah 3 Metro | 1 year |
| 2 | Informant 2 | SMPN 29 Bandar Lampung | 1 year |
| 3 | Informant 3 | SMKN Padang Cermin | 1 year |
| 4 | Informant 4 | SD Kreativa | 7 months |
| 5 | Informant 5 | Institut Sains Teknologi Nasional | 1 year |
| 6 | Informant 6 | Universitas Bhayangkara Jakarta Raya | 10 months |
| 7 | Informant 7 | Politeknik Kesuma Bangsa | 6 months |
| 8 | Informant 8 | Pringsewu Public Library | 1 year 11 months |
| 9 | Informant 9 | Pesisir Barat Public Library | 6 months |

Source: Research Data, 2025.

to ensure their relevance to the research objectives. Triangulation of data sources was applied by comparing responses from librarians across different types of libraries (Husnullail & Jailani, 2024). A total of nine informants participated, representing school libraries, university libraries, and public libraries. In addition, researchers used secondary data sources such as books, journals, or other written sources such as theses, dissertations, and previous research (Pratama, 2025).

The collected data were analyzed through several systematic stages. First, the data were reduced by selecting and focusing on information relevant to the research objectives. Next, the data were organized and grouped into thematic categories to facilitate the identification of patterns and relationships among concepts. The interpretation stage involved examining the meanings embedded in the categorized data to understand the forms of assertive behavior. Finally, conclusions were drawn through iterative verification to ensure consistency and alignment with the research questions and objectives (Sudaryana & Agusady, 2022), so that assertive behavior patterns can be systematically identified.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings in this study are based on interviews with nine informants. The theory used is the seven assertive statements according to Janette S. Caputo (1984). This concept serves as an analytical framework for understanding the assertive behavior of Generation Z librarians, as described below.

First, simple Assertion is the ability to

recognize, understand, and empathize with another person's experience by seeing the situation from their perspective. In this case, librarians have encountered library users who are experiencing difficulties and understand their feelings, as conveyed by Informant 6:

"Yes, understanding and providing solutions in the form of answers to the information needed by library users." (Informant 6, Interviewed, 10 November 2025).

In line with Informant 6, Informant 4 mentioned that:

"Assisting and guiding them through the difficulties they face" (Informant 4, Interviewed, 10 November 2025).

Also conveyed by informant 7:

"Yes, help him with his difficulties immediately." (Informant 7, Interviewed, 17 November 2025).

Informant 5 mentioned his experience in assisting users:

"Yes, I have experienced this. Usually, I help by asking what references they want to find, then I teach them how to search and use the OPAC machine until they find it." (Informant 5, Interviewed, 10 November 2025).

Some simple assertions made to show concern and understand the needs of users by Informant 2, such as:

"Serving well and kindly." (Informant 2, Interviewed, 10 November 2025).

Another example by Informant 3:

"Asking what users need and what information they are looking for." (Informant 3, Interviewed, 10 November 2025).

Informant 8 did the same thing:

“Asking library users what they need and helping them find the information they are looking for” (Informant 8, Interviewed, 10 November 2025).

Informant 1 shares the same opinion: “Asking questions and giving directions” (Informant 1, Interviewed, 12 November 2025).

This was also done by Informant 9: “Asking about his needs” (Informant 9, Interviewed, 17 November 2025).

The interview results show that Generation Z librarians apply simple assertion behavior with library users in information service interactions. This is evidenced by librarians who not only understand the difficulties faced by library users, but also show empathy through concrete actions such as asking about information needs, providing directions, and assisting with the search process through OPAC. This attitude reflects the application of user-oriented service communication, where librarians are not merely providers of information, but also facilitators who ensure that the information search process is effective and provides a positive service experience. Recent research in service quality emphasizes that effective interprofessional communication significantly enhances the quality of services delivered, particularly when staff demonstrate empathy and responsiveness to user needs (Wahyuningsih & Firmanda, 2025).

Second, emphatic Assertion is a form of communication that combines acknowledging other people’s feelings and conveying personal needs or views clearly and firmly. An example of this is when

librarians adjust their communication style to library users who are emotional, as stated by Informant 3:

“Reassuring users by speaking in a gentle tone” (Informant 3, Interviewed, 10 November 2025).

Informant 8 expressed his opinion by communicating:

“Engage him in direct communication and ask questions slowly so as not to further aggravate his emotions.” (Informant 8, Interviewed, 10 November 2025).

According to Informant 9:

“Continue to provide the best possible service in accordance with existing company operating standards.” (Informant 9, Interviewed, 17 November 2025).

According to Informant 6:

“Provide the desired answer patiently and slowly so that the reader understands what is being explained.” (Informant 6, Interviewed, 10 November 2025).

In addition, librarians need to express their feelings or opinions in situations of conflict or work pressure. According to Informant 4:

“Preventing stress accumulation and burnout, encouraging constructive problem solving, fostering a healthy and inclusive work culture, and enhancing professionalism and role clarity” (Informant 4, Interviewed, 10 November 2025).

According to Informant 7:

“To avoid stress” (Informant 7, Interviewed, 17 November 2025).

Meanwhile, according to Informant 5:

“To open up space for thinking” (Informant 5, Interviewed, 10

November 2025).

According to Informant 1:

“It is very important that there are no misunderstandings.” (Informant 1, Interviewed, 12 November 2025).

Informant 2 also shared the same opinion as Informant 1:

“Yes, it’s important.” (Informant 2, Interviewed, 10 November 2025).

The results of this interview show that Generation Z librarians apply empathetic assertion behavior by adjusting their communication style to the emotional state of users and the work situation. This is evidenced by librarians who understand the importance of calmly expressing feelings or opinions in order to prevent misunderstandings, open up space for thinking, and avoid emotional pressure, so that the interactions that are built are not only more effective but also reflect emotional regulation and social awareness, which are important parts of professional communication competence. Studies have confirmed that emotional intelligence is a critical factor in service professions, enabling staff to uphold professional values while managing challenging interpersonal situations (Butcher et al., 2025; Summey, 2017).

Third, Soft Assertion is a form of assertive communication used to convey appreciation, concern, or positive feelings. In certain situations, Generation Z librarians can use positive expressions to maintain good relationships in the workplace in the following ways, according to informant 7:

“When sharing” (Informant 7, Interviewed, 17 November 2025).

Informant 6 also conveyed the same thing:

“In discussion meetings or work evaluations” (Informant 6, Interviewed, 10 November 2025).

Furthermore, Informant 4 added that: “When giving feedback or criticism, when there are differences of opinion or conflicts, in high-pressure work situations, when giving appreciation or thanks, and when welcoming colleagues’ ideas or initiatives” (Informant 4, Interviewed, 10 November 2025).

In line with Informant 4, Informant 8 also believes that:

“When discussing and there are differences of opinion, in order to avoid conflict” (Informant 8, Interviewed, 10 November 2025).

According to Informant 5:

“Providing support, giving positive feedback, showing appreciation” (Informant 5, Interviewed, 10 November 2025).

Generation Z librarians can also express appreciation or gratitude to colleagues by giving compliments, as Informant 3 did:

“Praise his work.” (Informant 3, Interviewed, 10 November 2025).

Informant 9 also stated:

“Often giving compliments and learning from his experiences” (Informant 9, Interviewed, 17 November 2025).

This was also conveyed by Informant 2: “Praised for a moment” (Informant 2, Interviewed, 10 November 2025).

Informant 1 added:

“Congratulate and continue to encourage” (Informant 1, Interviewed, 12 November 2025).

Generation Z librarians apply soft assertion by providing support, positive feedback, and appreciation to colleagues. Generation Z librarians express appreciation through praise and recognition of their colleagues' performance, especially in meetings, evaluations, or when facing work pressure. Through this approach, librarians can help create a supportive working environment and strengthen collaboration to prevent conflicts.

Fourth, Anger assertion is a form of assertive communication used to express anger or dissatisfaction calmly while still respecting others. In practice, Generation Z librarians express frustration or anger, as expressed by Informant 2:

"Remaining silent and restraining oneself" (Informant 2, Interviewed, 10 November 2025).

Informant 3 stated that:

"Calmly and with a cool head." (Informant 3, Interviewed, 10 November 2025).

This was also conveyed by Informant 1: "Only speak kindly without offending others" (Informant 1, Interviewed, 12 November 2025).

Unlike Informant 5:

"Admonish them in a truly calm atmosphere and outside of work, by giving positive feedback to encourage them to continue improving." (Informant 5, Interviewed, 10 November 2025).

Informant 7 believes that:

"Self-evaluation" (Informant 7, Interviewed, 17 November 2025).

Generation Z librarians tend to channel their anger while maintaining communication ethics. This is demonstrated

by librarians managing their emotions, such as choosing to restrain themselves, reprimanding calmly, and expressing dissatisfaction at the right time and in the right situation. Not only that, a strategy is needed so that messages of dissatisfaction can be conveyed clearly but politely, as done by Informant 4:

"Convey your message clearly and remain polite" (Informant 4, Interviewed, 10 November 2025).

This was also done by Informant 9:

"Expressing oneself well" (Informant 9, Interviewed, 17 November 2025).

Informant 8 also conveyed the same thing:

"Expressing opinions and suggestions when starting a casual discussion" (Informant 8, Interviewed, 10 November 2025).

In addition, Informant 6 stated that:

"Expressing dissatisfaction politely so that it can be conveyed" (Informant 6, Interviewed, 10 November 2025).

The results of this interview show that Generation Z librarians apply anger assertion in a mature and professional manner. They do not respond impulsively to situations that trigger anger, but choose to consciously manage their emotions before expressing their opinions or dissatisfaction. This approach is evident in their tendency to engage in dialogue in a calm tone, refrain from overreacting, and choose the right moment to voice their objections.

In addition, librarians do not simply express dissatisfaction, but first conduct self-evaluations to ensure that the message conveyed remains proportionate and relevant to the context of the issue. This

attitude demonstrates good emotional regulation, which is an important indicator of interpersonal communication competence in the workplace. Librarians also endeavour to provide clear and structured reasons for dissatisfaction using polite language, so that the message can be received without causing resistance or further conflict.

This approach shows that asserting anger is not only about expressing dissatisfaction, but also about maintaining the quality of working relationships and professionalism. By balancing assertiveness and politeness, Generation Z librarians demonstrate the ability to validate their own feelings without disregarding the feelings of others, ensuring that the communication process remains productive and problem-solving oriented. Contemporary workplace research emphasizes that managing interpersonal conflicts through configurational approaches that integrate emotional awareness with assertive communication leads to more sustainable conflict resolution outcomes (Saikrishna, 2025).

Fifth, Confrontation assertion is a form of assertive communication that serves to reaffirm agreements, commitments, or responsibilities when the reality does not go according to what has been previously agreed upon. In practice, it is important for librarians to convey any discrepancies in work agreements. As stated by Informant 5:

“Using polite language when communicating, comparing data/facts as a proposal for a better agreement” (Informant 5, Interviewed, 10 November 2025).

Informant 1 stated that:

“It’s okay if they don’t listen, at least you’ve conveyed the message” (Informant 1, Interviewed, 12 November 2025).

This was also revealed by Informant 9: “Expressing oneself well” (Informant 9, Interviewed, 17 November 2025).

Furthermore, Informant 4 stated that: “Re-confirming the suitability of the contract and job description to ensure clarity and accuracy.” (Informant 4, Interviewed, 10 November 2025).

In contrast, Informant 7 stated that to convey the non-compliance of the work agreement, one should:

“Explaining and giving examples” (Informant 7, Interviewed, 17 November 2025).

There are several steps taken by librarians when colleagues do not fulfil their agreed commitments. According to Informant 6:

“Reporting to work superiors.” (Informant 6, Interviewed, 10 November 2025).

This is in contrast to Informant 8, who stated that:

“Discuss with the person concerned and ask what obstacles are preventing them from fulfilling the agreed commitments.” (Informant 8, Interviewed, 10 November 2025).

In line with Informant 8, Informant 3 stated that:

“Admonish politely and with polite words” (Informant 3, Interviewed, 10 November 2025).

This was also done by Informant 2:

“Reprimanded” (Informant 2,

Interviewed, 10 November 2025).

The interview results show that Generation Z librarians have the ability to renegotiate employment agreements in a polite, rational, and problem-solving manner. This ability is reflected in their tendency to express disagreement based on verifiable data or facts, so that the arguments presented are not personal, but objective and constructive. They are also able to assert their opinions without imposing their will, and strive to ensure clarity of roles, responsibilities and task boundaries through open communication processes.

In addition, Generation Z librarians demonstrate a variety of strategies for dealing with colleagues who do not fulfil their commitments. Some choose to issue a polite warning as a first step, while others opt for direct discussion to identify the obstacles preventing commitment from being fulfilled. In certain situations, they also do not hesitate to involve their superiors as mediators to maintain smooth teamwork. This diversity of approaches shows that confrontation assertion is not only understood as a reprimand, but as a dialogue process that considers the conditions, context, and most proportionate solutions. This approach demonstrates a level of communicative maturity and the ability to manage conflict professionally, which are important competencies in the dynamics of modern library work. Research on conflict management in educational institutions has shown that effective confrontation strategies, when combined with strong negotiation skills, significantly contribute to organizational effectiveness

and employee commitment (Agbo et al., 2025).

Sixth, Negative assertions are a form of assertive communication used to acknowledge mistakes honestly and openly without being defensive or feeling guilty. The aim is to demonstrate responsibility, emotional maturity, and a willingness to correct mistakes. According to Informant 7, librarians do the following things when they realise they have made a mistake at work in the library:

“Apologising and making amends” (Informant 7, Interviewed, 17 November 2025).

According to Informant 2:

“Making amends” (Informant 2, Interviewed, 10 November 2025).

Furthermore, Informant 4 stated that: “Repair as much as possible while it can still be repaired, and confirm with our superiors if it is too late to repair so that there are no misunderstandings.” (Informant 4, Interviewed, 10 November 2025).

According to Informant 3:

“Correct mistakes immediately and do not repeat the same mistakes” (Informant 3, Interviewed, 10 November 2025).

This is not the case with Informant 1, who revealed that:

“Double-checking, searching for valid literature and asking questions” (Informant 1, Interviewed, 12 November 2025).

Generation Z librarians strive to correct mistakes immediately, confirm with their superiors when necessary, and commit to not repeating them. This responsible

attitude in dealing with work mistakes is a form of negative assertion. Not only that, librarians have ways of maintaining positive communication after admitting mistakes, according to Informant 5:

“Calm down, apologise, take responsibility and offer a solution, learn from your mistakes.” (Informant 5, Interviewed, 10 November 2025).

This was also revealed by Informant 9: “Acknowledge and correct” (Informant 9, Interviewed, 17 November 2025).

According to Informant 8:

“Continue to perform your duties well again.” (Informant 8, Interviewed, 10 November 2025).

In line with Informant 8, Informant 6 believes that:

“Providing good service” (Informant 6, Interviewed, 10 November 2025).

These results indicate that the application of negative assertions by Generation Z librarians does not merely focus on acknowledging mistakes, but also includes the ability to maintain healthy interpersonal communication through sincere and measured apologies. This practice reflects emotional maturity and a willingness to take responsibility for the consequences of one’s actions. Furthermore, librarians did not stop at the stage of acknowledgement, but also demonstrated a strong commitment to restoring the service situation, correcting the mistakes that had occurred, and ensuring that service quality was maintained. This indicates that negative assertions function as a reflective process that encourages increased professionalism, as librarians are able to use mistakes as material for evaluation

in order to improve procedures, increase work accuracy, and maintain user trust. Thus, this behavior is not only reactive, but also contains a proactive dimension in maintaining the integrity of library services and constructive working relationships.

Seventh, Assertive disengagement is the ability to set boundaries in communication in a polite yet firm manner. This form of communication does not mean avoidance, but rather postponing the conversation so that it can be held at the right time and in a more stable emotional state. In practice, librarians convey several things to their colleagues when they want to postpone a conversation without offending anyone, such as Informant 1:

“Excuse me, sir/madam” (Informant 1, Interviewed, 12 November 2025).

Informant 6 also stated that:

“I’m sorry, I have a deadline.” (Informant 6, Interviewed, 10 November 2025).

In line with Informant 6, Informant 3 also said something similar:

“Apologising for postponing the conversation” (Informant 3, Interviewed, 10 November 2025).

In contrast, Informant 4 revealed that:

“Begin with appreciation or acknowledgement” (Informant 4, Interviewed, 10 November 2025).

Expressions such as apologising or explaining the reason for postponing a conversation are already used by Generation Z librarians. In addition, librarians are also able to manage situations when important discussions must be postponed, as stated by Informant 5:

“If I feel that I am not emotionally ready or that the timing is not right, I will be

honest and tell my friends or team. For example, “I want this discussion to be focused and productive, can we reschedule it later?” Then I will provide a clear new time option so that the discussion can be completed without feeling rushed. At that point, I prepare myself in advance so that the discussion is more effective and everyone remains comfortable.” (Informant 5, Interviewed, 10 November 2025).

Informant 2 stated that:
“Rest and reflect first” (Informant 2, Interviewed, 10 November 2025).

In line with Informant 2, Informant 9 revealed that:

“Permission to request time to understand the discussion” (Informant 9, Interviewed, 17 November 2025).

This is not the case with Informant 8:
“Take action sooner and prepare yourself so that you can” (Informant 8, Interviewed, 10 November 2025).

This also differs from Informant 7:
“Speak politely and clearly” (Informant 7, Interviewed, 17 November 2025).

This indicates that Generation Z librarians have the ability to assertively postpone important discussions. This ability is evident in their decision to postpone conversations when they feel emotionally unprepared or do not have sufficient time. In the context of library services, this action is a form of assertive disengagement that does not aim to avoid, but rather to rearrange the moment of communication to make it more conducive. Some librarians provided clear explanations and offered alternative times to keep the conversation focused and productive, while others used the pause to calm themselves, clarify their

thoughts, and prepare their arguments in a more structured manner. This practice demonstrates good metacognitive awareness and emotional regulation, which are important in maintaining the quality of professional interactions. In addition, the ability to postpone discussions appropriately also reflects an understanding that communication conducted in a stable emotional state is more effective in resolving problems and avoiding unnecessary escalation of conflict.

A simple method used by librarians to understand the needs and difficulties of library users is to provide clear guidance. As stated by Nurcahyadi (2022), This reflects effective communication. Librarians should not be difficult and should be open in conveying the information needed by library users. Librarians can also strive to consistently implement a code of ethics in libraries to maintain service quality (Halawa & Nurizzati, 2023)

Studies support that empathy skills improve the effectiveness of information services. This is supported by research conducted by Yuliana and Mardiyana (2021) which states that one of the important indicators of library service quality is the role of librarian empathy. Librarians can implement empathy by paying attention and understanding needs. Librarians with good emotional intelligence are generally more responsive, capable of showing empathy, and able to create a service atmosphere that makes library users feel more comfortable (Khofifah, 2025).

Providing support and appreciation to colleagues is a practice that strengthens teamwork and creates a positive work environment. As stated by Febrianty, et

al (2023) Appreciating achievements will boost morale and make people feel valued. There are various ways to show appreciation to colleagues, such as verbal appreciation, appreciation through rewards, appreciation through the provision of facilities, and appreciation through bonuses. In addition, it was also conveyed by Sativa and Rusmana (2023) that cohesiveness among members can build mutual trust and openness, thereby encouraging the creation of more solid work collaboration.

Handling anger in a controlled and ethical manner is an important aspect of maintaining professionalism in service. This is evidenced by research conducted by Sitorus & Nurhayani (2023) demonstrating that the quality of human resources is determined by self-awareness and emotions. To manage emotional quality, there are several steps, such as self-emotional suppression, self-improvement, and librarian assistance and communication.

Realigning ethical working agreements is a strength of Generation Z librarians in maintaining clear and structured communication. As a code of conduct, the code of ethics provides direction for librarians in maintaining their responsibilities. This code of ethics also emphasises the obligations of librarians towards library users, the profession, and themselves so that professional behavior is maintained (Jamridafrizal et al., 2024). The role of librarians in an institution emphasises that their competence is an important part of professional work (Bahrudin & Fadillah, 2021) mainly through deregulation. One of the implementations of these deregulation efforts is the development of the One-Stop

Service Center (PTSP).

These findings indicate that the assertive behaviour displayed by Generation Z librarians is characterised by open, empathetic, collaborative, and ethics-oriented communication, which is consistent with the adaptive, emotionally aware, and role-clarity-appreciating nature of Gen Z (Rahayu et al., 2025). This behaviour implies that library management needs to design work policies that support healthy communication (Darmayanti et al., 2024), developing librarian training based on emotional intelligence and assertiveness, and utilising the potential of Gen Z to improve the quality of responsive, professional, and user-centred services (Rahmah, 2025). Furthermore, intercultural communication competence and conflict resolution skills have become increasingly important in diverse workplace settings, where collaborative approaches enhance teamwork and organizational performance (Hussain et al., 2025).

CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicate that Generation Z librarians apply various forms of assertive behavior in conflict resolution and negotiation in libraries based on seven assertive statements. The use of simple assertion by providing clear instructions to library users ensures that communication runs effectively. The application of empathetic assertion by adjusting communication styles with consideration for the emotional state of users helps to avoid misunderstandings. Librarians practice soft assertion by providing support and appreciation

to colleagues, thereby creating a more supportive work environment. Librarians manage anger ethically through anger assertion to maintain professionalism. Confrontation assertion is practiced by renegotiating work agreements to prevent conflict. Negative assertion is practiced by openly acknowledging mistakes. In addition, assertive disengagement is applied by postponing discussions and preparing more mature arguments. These findings have practical implications for library management in designing assertiveness and emotional intelligence-based training, strengthening conflict resolution strategies, and improving service quality. This study enriches our understanding of the assertive behavior of Generation Z librarians in conflict resolution and negotiation in libraries. The limitations of this study lie in the number of informants and the interview method, which are still limited. Future research is encouraged to employ quantitative or mixed-methods designs with larger samples to examine the influence of organizational culture, emotional intelligence, and leadership on assertive behavior in greater depth.

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Author Contributions

Conceptualization, L.S.F. and A.M.; methodology, L.S.F.; software, L.S.F.; validation, L.S.F. and A.M.; formal analysis, L.S.F. and A.M.; investigation,

L.S.F.; resources, L.S.F. and A.M.; writing—original draft preparation, L.S.F.; writing—review and editing, A.M.; visualization, L.S.F.; supervision, A.M. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

AI Declaration

The authors declare that artificial intelligence (AI) tools, such as ChatGPT (OpenAI) and DeepL, were used solely to assist with language editing, grammar correction, and improving the clarity of the manuscript, and were not involved in the study design, data collection, analysis, interpretation, or generation of scientific conclusions; all AI-assisted content was carefully reviewed and validated by the authors, who take full responsibility for the integrity and accuracy of the work.

Data Availability Statement

The data supporting the findings of this research are not publicly available due to ethical and confidentiality considerations associated with qualitative interviews. Access may be granted at the discretion of the corresponding author.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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