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Village Library Capacity Building for Community Empowerment: A Case study in East Java, Indonesia

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Abstract

The development of information and communication technology makes the process of capacity building a necessity for libraries including those located in rural areas. The purpose of this study is to analyze the capacity building process of village libraries. The research method used is a case study with a qualitative research approach to obtain detailed and in-depth data. This research was conducted in 3 village libraries located in Karanglo Village, Podoroto Village, and Tondo Wulan Village in Jombang Regency, East Java. The results showed that the village libraries had conducted capacity building with the aim of community empowerment. The capacity building process that has been done includes formulating a new vision and mission, replacing the old organizational structure, providing training for village library managers, and creating a village library program according to the needs of the village community for community empowerment.

Keywords: capacity building, village library, community empowerment, public library

Introduction

As the world becomes increasingly sophisticated, a library is also required to develop and improve its quality. This is in line with the Basic Law of the Library by S. R. Ranganathan which states that a library is growing organisms that is not just "silent", meaning that it is an organization that continues to develop and to make new transformations and innovations from time to time. (Barner, 2011). A library today is different from the past, in which it develops social capital to users for solving problems, improving soft skills and creating creative and innovative work that can be used in daily life in their environment, so that the community becomes empowered (Hart, 2007; Barnikis, 2014). To fulfil these functions, a library carries out capacity building so that it does not only focus on providing collections and information to increase the reading interest of users, but also provides the liberty of the users to acquire skills, develop creativity, create something and try new activities according to their own interests.

Not only large-scale public libraries have conducted capacity building, but also small-scale public libraries such as village libraries have also begun conducting capacity

building to make libraries a "gathering point" for positive activities for community empowerment. Community empowerment efforts have been conducted by several village libraries including Margamukti Village Library located in Pangalengan-Bandung with the aim to improve the welfare and quality of life of the village community. The results of research conducted by Rohman and Sukaesih (2017) revealed that village libraries play an important role in community empowerment. Community empowerment activities are done by creating programs that involve the community, such as activities in agriculture and farming. The programs also involve mothers and young women in making snack products that can later be sold to the market.

Village libraries conduct community empowerment by increasing reading interest in books, because the more books are read, the more knowledge can be acquired to improve the quality of life (Maskurotunitsa & Rohmiyati, 2016; Nature, 2015). Village libraries in community empowerment also act as centers for providing adequate and relevant information about problems in rural areas (Nwokocho & Chimah, 2016; Iwe, 2003).

The phenomenon that occurs shows that village libraries in this era has done capacity building to empower village communities. Village libraries serving users from all segments of the village community have unique characteristics. The characteristics of the village community are simple, harmonious, religious, and communal. Village libraries can be used by all community members in doing any activity even though it has nothing to do with "reading a book".

Activities in a village library not only focus on reading materials that have been provided, but also emphasize on other positive activities that can be carried out by a village community in a library. This raises an issue for librarians as village library managers, who are initially only trained to become good librarians in managing and providing information to users (Omeluzor, Oyovwe-Tinuoye & Emeka-Ukwu, 2017). In this case, librarians are required to have additional abilities beyond library competencies as what they do in community empowerment programs is not always related to the library, but also beyond that (Williams & Willet, 2017; Koh & Abbas, 2015), not to mention the problem of facilities provision that must be addressed by libraries when the empowerment program is carried out. These problems must be considered by village libraries.

The physical condition of village libraries is also inadequate or not in accordance with village library standards including inadequate human resources, insufficient size of the library room, incomplete infrastructure facilities, and lack of or out of date collections (Margiani, Ngusmanto, Syaifei, 2014). Village libraries have not been used maximally by the village community. In fact, they are only used by children. The results of the study by Eismawati (2010) showed that most visitors of a village library / community reading park (TBM) were children. Only 22.8% of parents came to the village library to accompany their children to play or borrow books. It is even more ironic that parents consider the information and collection of reading materials in the village library as less appropriate to their information needs.

Village Libraries in Jombang Regency, namely Karanglo Village Library, Podoroto Village Library, and Tondo Wulan Village Library are village libraries that also do capacity building for library managers. The libraries have become the centre of village

community activities and many empowerment programs have conducted since early 2017 in which village communities actively participate in activities or programs that have been made. The community empowerment program that has been carried out is not only focused on groups of child users, but also groups of adult users. The activities that have been conducted include Banjarian (Islamic musical art), parenting seminars and mentoring programs for Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises in conducting their businesses. This research aims to find out the capacity building process of village libraries for community empowerment.

Literature review

Capacity is simply defined as the ability to overcome problems with the best solution. The capacity possessed by each individual or organization needs to be built and developed in accordance with the current condition, in which society will continue to develop and people will change adopting to changing times. In general, development activities are defined as concepts that are closely related to education, training and human resources development (Yamoah, 2013). Therefore, capacity building for human resources in a broad sense can refer to the increase of ability of all human resources to do appropriate tasks in broader organizational performance standards.

An organization needs to develop, improve and also reform to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and responsiveness of the organization (Grindle, 1997). The efficiency refers to efficient time and resources needed to achieve an outcome, effectiveness is in the form of appropriateness of business carried out for the desired results, and responsiveness refers to how to synchronize the needs and abilities for the purpose. In capacity development, there are some dimensions that need to be considered (Grindle, 1997), namely, (1) developing human resources focusing on professionalism and technical ability, (2) strengthening organization, (3). reformation of institution. In the first dimension, organizational capacity building is related to human resources investment so that the organization's human resources have new skills and abilities to achieve organizational goals. Through renewal, organization can create new metabolisms and accelerate the dissemination of knowledge within the organization. Organizations increasingly require individual responsibility, individual integrity and individual commitment. Through this strategy the organization is required to develop human resources who can think independently and work interactively. They understand how to work alone and when to work with others, and are proud of their work performance. The second dimension focuses on management procedures to improve the success of roles and functions. There is a shift in the organization to achieve goals. On the basis of these thoughts it can be said that organizations open new mindsets in an effort to achieve organizational goals through new visions and missions. The organization must also provide encouragement and motivation to each individual in it. The third dimension focuses on institutions, systems and structures, realignment of the organization in order to deal with the dynamics of the internal and external environment of the organization. Thus, this dimension allows the reduction or addition of members of the organization in accordance with the needs of the organization.

The previous research conducted by Oguiche, Gabasa, & Lamidi (2017) was related to capacity building, and training and development needs for library and information professionals. That research aims to find out the need for training and development of library and information professionals, which also highlights the core skills and competencies needed and the strategies to achieve them. It has been realized that in every organization including libraries, capacity building is a key factor in dealing with a change especially in the digital era where tools and technology evolve at a geometric level. It is also a fact that any success or failure in the library depends heavily on the level and capacity of its staff. Therefore, competence and skills are the basic building blocks of human management of human resources. The research provides specific advice that can be adopted by library and information professionals in developing and building their capacity.

Previous research on library capacity building was also conducted by Khan, Idrees, & Khan (2013). Their research aims to assess and describe the initiatives taken in developing staff in the library of the Pakistan Academy so that the service process becomes more effective. This study also illustrates the changes that were seen in the professional improvement of library staff before and after the initiative was conducted. The method used in the study is an observational study by collecting data through personal interviews, table talks with library staff, and annual library performance evaluation reports. The study concluded that the initiation carried out was useful for developing the competency of library staff. The staff development activities done by the library not only develop skills at the individual level but also contribute to achieving the goals of the library. The study presents an original view by the author based on observation, interviews and examining performance evaluation reports from library staff.

In addition to the two previous studies that have been discussed, research conducted by Otsonu, Asom, Zuwaira & Olike (2016) also discussed the development of specialized library staff in the Benue state of Nigeria. The study aimed to test challenges and find improvements in staff development so that library services become more effective. The findings of the study revealed that, the lecture method, job rotation, training methods, coaching, were accepted as methods for library staff development. The results also showed several problems related to staff development in special libraries, including lack of funds to develop library programs, lack of budget allocated to specialized libraries, lack of sponsored programs for staff development, discrimination against library staff and lack of appropriate processes in staff selection for training. The study also recommended creating well-written staff development policies. The study concluded that staff development might not be a magical approach to improve the effectiveness of library services to meet user information requests.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative method with a case study. According to Sugiyono (2009) qualitative research methods are used to understand the meaning behind visible phenomena. Social phenomena often cannot be understood based on what people say and do as each word and action of people often has a certain meaning. A case study is a type of

research method suitable for answering questions related to *how* and *why*. Another reason for using this method is that there are few opportunities to control events, and the focus of research is contemporary and real events (Yin, 2009).

The location of this study was in Karanglo Village Library, Podoroto Village Library, and Tondo Wulan Village Library, all of which are in Jombang Regency, East Java. The three libraries were selected because they have done capacity building on services for the community as users. The village libraries have been transformed into a "gathering point" for the centre of positive village community activities for community empowerment.

The determination of the informants was done by purposive sampling. This is because the sample should correspond with the objectives of this study. The following are the informants in this study: 1). The leader of the village library; 2). The manager of the village library; 3). The village community

Finding and Discussion

It has become the desire and hope of the village government as the party responsible for the sustainability of the village library to conduct the capacity building process since they see the condition of the library that is not utilized to its maximum. The initial condition of the village library is not managed properly and the space of the village library is very narrow. The village library room is 2x3 m, which is still below the standard area of the village library. According to the SNI 7596: 2010 Village Library Standard, the size of the library room is at least 56 m². When compared with the area of village libraries according to SNI, the area of village library space is still far below the established standards. The village community as users do not feel comfortable when using the library. This therefore can make the village library empty of visitors.

In the narrow library room, the village library only provides a collection of reading materials arranged on bookshelves. The collection of reading material is not provided by the library itself, but it is a book and shelf grant from the Provincial Government of East Java

The development of the human resource

This dimension is more related to human resources and the passion for organizational change for the better than before. This dimension is about investing in human resources in organizations, so new skills and competencies from human resources are emphasized. The organization is concerned with changes in the external environment that occur so that it seeks to improve the skills and new competencies of human resources to achieve the organization's vision and mission. When human resources in the organization improve their skills and competencies, it will automatically increase the spread of new knowledge within the organization. The managers of village libraries have different educational backgrounds: high school graduates, bachelor degree graduates and master's degree graduates. There are many village library managers who do not have a library education background, even though their work is about managing the library. When referring to the Indonesian National Standard (SNI) 7596: 2010 concerning Village

Libraries, the qualification of the head of the library is educated person that has at least a high school degree or equivalent plus training in the library field.

These managers act as library mobilizers and need a new competency that is suitable with the needs of the village library. Many social changes occur in society due to technological developments. The competence and capacity possessed by the library manager must also be able to adjust to the situation and conditions of changing times. Thus, the process of capacity building and character building for human resources is absolutely necessary. Capacity building can be described as an ongoing process to equip library managers with the knowledge, skills and attitudes that enable them to cope with change and provide library services according to the established vision and mission.

In this context, capacity building emphasizes the need to build what already exists to enhance and strengthen present capacities, and to develop and grow new knowledge and skills. When library managers face new developments that require them to improve their skills, it is important for them to have access to the most relevant and up-to-date information (Bradley, 2010). They also need access to opportunities to apply new skills and make changes in information services in the library so that all people's information needs and satisfaction with services can be met (Hauke & Werner, 2012).

Moreover, the village library manager does not have a library science education background and has no experience in managing the library, and therefore capacity building is very important to do. Although the library manager does not have a library background, it can still help library management, but competence must be improved (Jage & Nassimbeni, 2007). Village libraries have a scope that is not broad, serving only the people who are in the village (Griffis & Jonhson, 2013). With this capacity building, it can improve the ability of library managers in a short amount of time.

From the results of the implementation of capacity building, there have been many activities conducted by the village library that can increase community visits to the village library. These activities include computer basic training attended by elementary and junior high school students. This training is held on an ongoing basis with a predetermined schedule every week, and it also gets a good reception from the community. In addition, there are also activities provided to the community, such as creative dance training, Joint gymnastics, fish processing training, linguistic psychology workshop and village innovation product training. These activities are conducted not only in one day, but also in a week.

Strengthening organization

The strengthening organization dimension is used by organizations to know how organizations can achieve their stated goals. Until 2017, Karanglo Village Library, Podoroto Village Library, and Tondo Wulan Village Library in collaboration with PerpuSeru from Coca-Cola Foundation Indonesia (CCFI) has conducted capacity building. This PerpuSeru program is a library development in Indonesia where the library becomes a center of learning and community activities based on information and communication technology to improve the quality of life of the community. The village libraries do not automatically get library development assistance from the PerpuSeru program, but through selection by the Jombang Regency Public Library. From the selection, 3 village libraries were selected

namely Tondo Maos Village Library from Tondo Wulan Village, Podoroto Village Library from Podoroto Village and Karanglo Village Library from Karanglo Village.

After making collaboration with PerpuSeru program, the village library managers formulated new vision, mission and objectives to determine the direction of the village libraries. This will strengthen commitment and responsibility for village library managers to create an organization's vision and mission, preparing the organizations in the future. Vision and mission are created in accordance with the goals to be achieved by the organization (Gouillart and Kelly, 2014). The three village libraries have the same vision and mission, which is to help find the potential of the village that can be developed so that from that potential the community becomes empowered. The potential that exists in each village can be used as a means to create the independence of the village and its community.

The next step needed in the capacity building process is that the organization leader builds a measurement system. In this case the organization's leaders need to determine targets to achieve the sustainability of the organizations being led. The vision and mission that have been set need to be actualized into concrete actions so that they are easily achieved (Mithe & Utami, 2018). The Karanglo Village Library, Podoroto Village Library, and Tondo Wulan Village Library in actualizing the first vision and mission is by expanding the village library room. As previously explained that the village library room is very narrow, then the room is expanded to triple the initial size of 2x3m to 7x9m. The library room is used to facilitate activities held in the village libraries. When the user is comfortable in the library, s/he will feel at home. The next actualization of vision and mission by the village libraries is by installing an internet wi-fi network. The village libraries must also be able to keep up with the demands of changing times, which are marked by the development of sophisticated technology, information and communication. Although in this case are only village libraries, they still have to adjust to the environment. If the village libraries only provide collections in the form of books, they will be left by the users.

Reformation of institution

This dimension is related to the form of organization and the level of competition that the organization wants to achieve. Mithe & Utami (2018) explain the dimension of reformation of institutions as changes in organizational structure both vertically and horizontally so that it is more effective in achieving the expected goals. In a similar vein, Robbins (2006) defines the dimension of reformation of institution as the process of organizational restructuring in order to face the dynamics of the internal and external environment of the organization. Thus, in the dimension of reformation of this institution, it is possible to reduce or increase the membership of the organization in accordance with the needs of the organization.

In early 2017, by creating new visions, missions and goals, the values in the village libraries were also new, referring to the village library as a learning center and positive community activities based on information and communication technology to improve the quality of life of the community. There are some old values that are maintained, such as reading and borrowing services of collections of books provided by the village libraries. Despite many new activities in the village libraries, the activity of reading books is still

maintained. The book collection service in the village library has the aim to increase public interest in reading. As stated by Alam (2015), the presence of village libraries in the midst of the community must be realized in order to build a reading culture of the society and achieve the ideals of the nation, which is to educate the nation and prosper the life of the nation.

Furthermore, in the dimension of reformation of institution, it is important to redesign the work system of the organization. When carrying out the capacity building process there are policy changes for work units in the organization, so these changes can affect the organization's performance to achieve the organization's vision, mission and goals. The need to redesign the work systems of the organizations involved aims to adapt to the challenges of the new work that become the objective of the organization (Mithe & Utami, 2018). The village library also created a new organizational structure by adjusting the needs of the village library.

The village library manager is not only from the core manager, but is also assisted by volunteers from the village youth or youth organization, not from the adults. The existence of these volunteers helps library operations and community activities organized by the village libraries. The decision of the village libraries in choosing youth and women as volunteers to help manage the library is very appropriate. The village library managers want to make the village libraries a community gathering point for positive activities based on information and communication technology. If compared between the skills of adults and village youth in using computer equipment, village youth is more agile in using technology. This is because the village youth is a native digital generation, in which they were born in 1995-2009 (McCrinkle, 2014) or when the internet network has developed so that they are more familiar with technological devices. Meanwhile, adults are digital immigrant generation. According to Marc Prensky (2001) digital immigrant generations are people who are born before the internet so that their childhood is still unfamiliar with the internet but when they are adults, they use the internet

In the dimension of reformation of institution, it is important to integrate physical infrastructure, by gathering both key and supporting components to strengthen the organization. The physical component in this case is the infrastructure in the village library. Before the process of capacity building of infrastructure facilities that supported the function of the library, there was only a collection of books less than 1000 arranged on the shelves from the East Java Provincial Government grant. Meanwhile, after the capacity building process, the village libraries have 3 units of computers connected to the internet network. The 3 computer units are not provided by the village government or the village libraries, but obtained by a grant from the collaboration with PerpuSeru. The distribution of 3 computer units from PerpuSeru aims to support the vision and mission of PerpuSeru namely the library as a center of learning and positive community activities based on information and communication technology to improve the quality of people's lives. The existence of computer equipment in the village library can support community education in schools, especially for children who are still at the elementary and junior high school level. Unlike the education system in urban areas, the education system in villages does not have a computer course and in schools there is no computer, so everything is still manual.

Efforts to focus on users made by the village libraries before planning activities are done by making initial observation on the community. The observation is assisted by the village government. It aims to see what is needed by the community. Not all needs of the community can be facilitated by the village library, therefore village libraries determine the priority needs of the community that is more important. Furthermore, the village libraries planned programs based on observations made. The village libraries have many programs aimed at the community, not only for children, but also for adults or mothers. The planning of village library programs is carried out one year before the implementation so that the village libraries follow the program schedule that has been made.

Village library program for children is in the form of education or tutoring on the use of computers, and teaching planting hydroponic plants, while programs for teenagers include chess training and graphic design training. These activities however are also not conducted routinely. For routine activities in the village library room are Banjarian training for members Islamic Student Association. Activities for mothers are workshops and entrepreneurship training or cooking activities, but these are not held routinely by the village libraries. Mothers who are members of Islamic organization also use the library room facilities for Qoshidah (Islamic music) training using tambourines.

Community empowerment in village library

Previous research conducted by Asyiroh (2017) stated that village libraries conduct community empowerment activities through three aspects, namely the aspect of human development, environmental development aspects, and institutional development aspects. This is reflected in welfare improvement programs through these three aspects. Village libraries in conducting community empowerment can also be done with community engagement programs for learning and activities in agriculture, plantations and creative economy, while to reach communities in remote areas, library car services are also provided (Rohmah & Sukaesih, 2017).

The activity done by the village library aims to encourage the community, especially among women, to create business opportunities starting from simple processed products because many women in rural areas work as housewives. Housewives must continue to be encouraged to carry out productive activities so as to help the family economy. In line with research conducted by Rohman & Sukaesih (2017), the library of Margamukti Pandeglang Village, Banten provides guidance to community members, especially women in terms of entrepreneurship so that they can do their own business. Entrepreneurship development carried out include giving a training to make processed snacks that can be sold in the market. The presence of the village library in the midst of the community provides business opportunities and increases community income.

The program for mothers in all three villages is entrepreneurship training to make simple processed food that can be sold in the market. Many participants are mothers who took part in the training activities in the village library, but they only came to attend the training. Although the village libraries have tried to organize useful activities, the mothers are not stimulated to make groups to create an innovative product that is worth selling,

increasing profits in accordance with the expectations of the village libraries. The village libraries also make activities targeted at the village farmers group. Thus, the village community groups who work as farmers can also obtain benefits from activities carried out by the village library. The village farmers group has a special association of farmers to discuss agricultural issues so that the benefits of the village library in the midst of the community can be gained by all levels of society without exception, including the majority of people working in agriculture.

Conclusion

Improving the quality of village libraries should not only be supported by the large number of collections provided and the available infrastructure, but also the competence and capacity of library managers since they are the ones who manage the village library, the quality of library services depends on their competency and capacity. Therefore, it is necessary to build capacity in the library manager to gain new knowledge and skills that are in accordance with the conditions of the community as users of the village library. This conformity needs to be considered as when it is not in accordance with the current conditions of the users, the objectives of the library are difficult to achieve. If the purpose of the village library is to increase community empowerment, the capacity building of the village library must also be adjusted to reflect the conditions of the village community. For further research, it can examine the capacity building of village libraries for community empowerment by selecting certain community groups, such as groups of farmers, groups of housewives, teenagers or others as in this study community groups are general. If certain groups of people are selected, the study may reveal more comprehensive results.

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