The Impact of Human Capital on Information Literate Behavior Among Librarians:
A case study at University of Diponegoro

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ABSTRACT

Information literacy has become one of the key competency needed by any individual in the information age. Librarians as information professionals are required to play its part in developing this competency. For librarians themselves, this competency become a twofold obligation. First, they have to be information literate so that they can make the most use of information for their own need, for any purposes. Second, they have the obligation to teach this competency to library users, so that they can access, evaluate and use information critically and wisely. The competency itself can be gained through various ways (Bruce, 1997) : including information literacy education. However, in Indonesia, information literacy education for librarians has not been widely available. While information resources proliferate, librarians have not been formally armed with skills to critically harness new formats of information resources. Therefore their information literacy competency development rely more on the knowledge of information skills gained through life experiences. This phenomena can be analyzed by using the sociological perspective of human capital. Through the lens of human capital theory, information literacy is the accumulation of one's knowledge through general education, training (either general or specific) and other life experiences related to information handling, such as technology use, access to sources of information, etc. These three factors will help individuals develop their

information literacy. This paper try to examine the relationship between human capital development and information literate behavior among librarians.

Introduction

Information has long become the basis for man to make decisions. Thus, the skills to handle information is necessary. Nowadays, the skills becomes far more important because we have to deal with a high amount of information, from many sources, with varied quality. Therefore, handling information becomes a daunting task for everyone in this information age.

This information handling skill is well known as information literacy. It has become one of the key competency needed by any individual in the information age, including the librarians who's always involved in the information field. Librarians as information professionals are required to play its part in developing this competency. For librarians themselves, this competency become a twofold obligation. First, they have to be information literate so that they can make the most use of information for their own need, for any purposes. Second, they have the obligation to teach this competency to library users, so that they can access, evaluate and use information critically and wisely.

With such obligations, librarians are required to become information literate. However, to be information literate the librarians have to be keep pace with the rapid growth of information, including the sources, the formats, and the tools used to find, to harness and to disseminate information. Librarians have to keep themselves informed with such developments in the field. This can be done either by taking formal education or self learning.

Formal education for information literacy becomes an important step to prepare librarians with a better competency. However, in Indonesia, information literacy education for librarians has not been widely available. While information resources proliferate, librarians have not been formally armed with skills to critically harness new formats of information resources.

So far, not all library science department took information literacy as part of their curriculum. University of Indonesia, Padjadjaran University, and University of Airlangga

are among the few institutions which embrace information literacy as part of their library science curriculum. Meanwhile, information literacy trainings have not been widely carried out. Approximately, there were 100 state universities and 3.078 private universities nationwide, and yet only few of them hold information literacy trainings for their students. University of Indonesia, Sanata Dharma University, Satya Wacana Christian University are among the few institutions which hold information literacy trainings on a regular basis.

For the librarians, trainings on information literacy has not been widely available. There has been initiatives for Trainings of Trainers though. These initiatives came from library associations such as APISI (association of school libraries), FPPTI Yogyakarta (association of academic libraries in Yogyakarta), APTIK library network (library network of libraries of Catholic universities/colleges), and joint ToT between Pelita Harapan University and Padjadjaran University.

Therefore their information literacy competency development rely more on the knowledge of information skills gained through life experiences. This phenomena can be analyzed by using the sociological perspective of human capital.

Literature Review

In sociology there is a theory which developed from theories in economics, that is human capital theory. The concept of the theory was introduced Adam Smith and then further developed by Becker. According to Becker (Kulvisaechana, ?) human capital is "The stock of knowledge, skills and abilities embedded in an individual that results from natural endowment and subsequent investment in education, training and experience". In other words, human capital is the knowledge that people gain through education, training and experience.

The basic concept of human capital theory is that human production process is not merely derived from their physical capabilities, but also their knowledge and skills. Human capital itself can be classified as : general human capital and specific human capital. General human capital are those knowledge and skills that can be used for general activities, meanwhile specific human capital can only be used for specific activities.

Literacy is regarded as general human capital. But we are in the information age now, therefore, the literacy needed is not merely on the ability to read and write, but the ability to wisely harness information to support our life. Therefore we need information literacy. According to ALA, information literacy *is a set of abilities requiring individuals to "recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information.* As an ability, information literacy can be seen from one's behavior.

Information literate competency can be gained through various ways. It can be built upon one's interaction with information. According to Bruce (2012), the interactions which builds information literacy are : IT experience, information sources experience, information processs experience, information control experience, knowledge construction experience, knowledge extention experience, and the wisdom experience.

Relating information literacy to human capital theory, one can regard information literacy as the accumulation of one's knowledge through general education, training (either general or specific) and other life experiences related to information handling, such as technology use, access to sources of information, etc. These three factors will help individuals develop their information literacy.

The impact of these factors on information literacy has been done by Setyowati (2013). In her research which was using quantitative approach, it was found that there was a significant impact of human capital on information literate behavior among librarians. A further step to explore more on how human capital have an impact on information literacy needed to be done as a follow up study of this research. This research try to examine the how human capital development have an impact on information literate behavior among librarians.

Research Methods

This research was conducted with qualitative approach, involving 4 librarians with different background: skilled and expert librarians, holding graduate, undergraduate and undergraduate diploma degree as key informants. Data was gathered through in depth

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interview with the informants, to collect information on to find the answers to 3 issues, those were: How does education play a role in developing information literacy? How does trainings on librarianship play a role in developing information literacy? How does professional experiences play a role in developing information literacy? Data collected was then analyzed through data reduction and data interpretation.

Research Findings

The research findings were that as the librarians has not get formal information literacy trainings, their understanding on information literacy varied. Some regard it as information skills, other regard it as media literacy, and there was also a librarian who saw it as materials which contains information.

Although their understanding varied, they have actually put information literacy in practice, either to support their study task, their work task and daily life task. This can be noticed from their experiences in information literate behavior: making decisions based on the information they've gathered, applying new knowledge and skills to improve their task accomplishment, sharing information with their coworkers, etc.

Information literacy has become part of librarians' human capital which was gained not through specific training on information literacy, but rather from their own experiences in information interactions. Librarians' human capital was accumulated through: Education, Trainings, and Information experiences

When taking a formal education they had study experiences. Although the pedagogical method may not compel them to be independent learner, they are introduced to such value when seeking information to do their assignments. As they gather information, they face various information and have to be able to make a decision on what information to use. Critical thinking is needed to make such decisions, so that they would be able to evaluate information. They must be able to differ the good from the bad. Furthermore, as students are compelled to do their task, they learn how to comprehend what read and communicate their knowledge. They are accustomed to have discussion with their schoolmates and to share information. They are not only encouraged to gather information

from various sources (teacher/lecturers, friends, books, or internet) but also to use information technology to access information. Higher education also introduced them higher level of thinking and broader knowledge. Better analytical skills are required for higher level of education and broader knowledge means that one have to be able to gather more information.

During the formal education, they also gained other skills that support information literacy, such as language skills, particularly foreign language, and technology skills. Meanwhile, non formal education have the role to introduce them with reading habit. Reading habit was introduced from their early ages by their family members and their neighborhood along with the background knowledge during one's early years. One can also gained information literacy from their work environment and their coworkers, they were introduced to new sources of information which were available in their workplace. Through information sharing, one learned how to harness technology to access and manage information. Another means of non formal education is spouses. For female librarians, spouses gave them new knowledge on IT.

All of these built and support one's information habit, which further develops one's information literacy The role of trainings on librarianships is to broaden their knowledge that support information literacy. One may not have attended specific training on information literacy, but they may built their own information literacy through knowledge gained from trainings on information technology, document handling, oral and written communications, and information retrieval through various means. The mastery of the new knowledge was influenced by their prior experiences. Prior experiences will help them to engage to the trainings on librarianship, since they can relate their own experience with new information they gain from the trainings. The knowledge they built will have an impact on information practices and information literate behavior.

Professional experiences role in developing one's information literate behavior can be seen from the various professional experiences they had, such as teaching, becoming a trainer or instructor, becoming a speaker in seminars, consultant, volunteering, and also

conducting research. Information is very much needed to support these activities. Therefore, one is required to have information skills and perform information literate behavior.

Conclusions

Although they haven't had specific education or training on information literacy, the librarians have shown information literate behaviors. Their information literacy developed from their education, trainings on librarianships and their professional experiences. These information literate behaviors are done both to support their work duties and their daily activities. It is hoped that they can make further use of information, as means of a life long learner and means of self actualization and have information wisdom.

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