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The Urgency of Librarian Competency Development in the Digital Age

Urgensi Pengembangan Kompetensi Pustakawan Pada Era Digital

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Abstract

Background of the study: Advances in information technology have brought changes to all aspects of life, including libraries as information institutions transforming from conventional to digital. In facing this situation, libraries and librarians must be able to adapt and keep up with current developments so that their users do not abandon them. Therefore, it is necessary to develop the competence of librarians as an effort to deal with this.

Purpose: The aim of this research was to determine the urgency of developing librarian competency in the digital era.

Method: The method used in this research is qualitative with a library or literature study approach

Findings: The research results found that it is important to develop the competence of librarians so that the existence of libraries as institutions and librarians as the main actors in providing services to libraries can survive and adapt in the face of every changing era

Conclusion: Competencies that librarians can develop in facing the digital era are by having literacy skills, trying to increase knowledge about information and communication technology.

Keywords: Librarian; Competence; Digital Era

Abstract in Indonesia

Background of the study: *Kemajuan teknologi informasi membawa perubahan terhadap semua aspek kehidupan, tidak terkecuali perpustakaan sebagai lembaga informasi bertransformasi dari konvensional ke digital. Dalam menghadapi keadaan tersebut perpustakaan dan pustakawan harus mampu untuk beradaptasi dan mengikuti perkembangan zaman agar tidak ditinggalkan oleh penggunanya. Oleh karena itu, diperlukan pengembangan kompetensi pustakawan sebagai salah satu upaya menghadapi hal tersebut.*

Purpose: *Tujuan penelitian ini dilakukan untuk mengetahui urgensi pengembangan kompetensi pustakawan pada era digital.*

Method: *Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi pustaka atau kepustakaan.*

Findings: *Hasil penelitian menemukan bahwa pentingnya pengembangan kompetensi pustakawan agar eksistensi perpustakaan sebagai lembaga dan pustakawan sebagai pelaku utama dalam memberikan layanan kepada pemustaka dapat bertahan dan beradaptasi dalam menghadapi setiap perubahan zaman*

Conclusion: *Kompetensi yang dapat dikembangkan pustakawan dalam menghadapi era digital dengan memiliki kemampuan literasi, berupaya untuk meningkatkan pengetahuan tentang teknologi informasi dan komunikasi.*

Kata kunci: *Peran;* *Pustakawan; Kompetens; Era Digital*

Introduction

Advances in technology and information bring inevitable changes to all aspects of human life. Ready or not, every human and institution must be able to keep up with existing developments and dare to make changes. Advances in information and communication technology also affect libraries as information institutions so that they are required to be able to transform from conventional libraries to libraries that are integrated with technology. Change or transformation is not only for libraries, but librarians as human resources who work in libraries are also required to be able to keep up with the times. Librarians are no longer synonymous as guardians of book collections, when there are no visitors or no picket schedule in the service, happy to sit around (while playing social media for example), but are also required to be information servants and guides for users who come to the library or serve through means of communication such as via WhatsApp, Instagram library and others. They must be able to master various digital technologies to provide services that are innovative and relevant to user needs. Therefore, librarians need to improve their competencies so that the needs of users are well met (Saifuddin & Perdani SP, 2020).

In Indonesia, from the center to the regions, the progress of libraries has been required to be able to utilize this technology, where the internet network has been rampant to the villages, but there are still many librarians who do not have adequate competence to face the digital era. This can be seen from the many libraries that have not optimally utilized digital technology. In addition, there are still many librarians who do not have the ability to provide quality information services to users through technological assistance, for example helping users find reference sources of information online through data bases and free e-books and e-journals. As research conducted by Nailah Hanum Hanany (2023) shows that the competence of librarians is still limited to managing printed collections. Therefore, it is very important to improve the competence development and technological advancement of librarians, and libraries must also provide technological facilities such as computers and free internet in their services, so that the role of libraries continues to play an important role in helping people in the digital era.

There are several reasons why librarian competency development needs to be improved in today's digital era: changes in the way people access and obtain information, the increasing number of digital information sources, library visitors are increasingly diverse, their needs vary according to the times (Tawwaf, 2018). So that users prefer instant, easy and fast information obtained, competition from various other information providers, including information search engines such as Google and various social media. Therefore, librarians need to have the ability to provide quality digital information services, have the ability to search, evaluate, and manage digital information sources effectively, must be smart in understanding user needs and providing services that suit their needs, and must be able to compete with other information providers and be able to attract users to come flocking to the library. This is in line with research conducted by Novita Vitriana (2024) that librarians need to pay attention and be proactive in terms of data, information, and knowledge technology.

Facing the changes of the digital era, librarians must have special abilities and skills that are in accordance with the times. Libraries must also be able to face the digital era by having competent librarians (Nadhifah, 2019). Not only that, librarians must also have a smart, creative, and innovative mindset (Kurniasih, 2015). The development of librarian competencies includes three elements: knowledge, attitudes, and creativity needed to meet

library goals, objectives, and performance standards (Suwarno, 2016). Therefore, besides being needed to carry out a job, competency development also helps professionals (librarians) do their jobs more easily and produce optimal work or performance (Suwinardi, 2017). This is intended to realize the library's goal of providing services in accordance with the development of the needs of its librarians (Ngatini, 2018). In other words, advances in information technology not only require librarians to be able to do technical work, but also non-technical work that leads to the development of librarians and the library itself.

Based on previous literature research, a number of researchers have conducted research on developing librarian competencies. First, research conducted by I.W. Nada (Nada, 2021) states that librarians, in addition to having the necessary abilities to meet professional standards, must also have additional skills such as the spirit to be themselves, the ability to use technology, the ability to organize and communicate, and the ability to disseminate their knowledge and skills. Second, research conducted by Alifia Cahyaningtyas Aritra, et al (Aritra et al., 2018) that librarians in the technological era must have superior abilities in order to handle the demands of today's dynamic information. Third, a study conducted by Tiara Hilda Safitri (Hilda Safitri, 2017) entitled Professional Librarians in the Digital era concluded that professional librarians must have various competencies that can be used in answering various challenges. From the results of the above research, it can be seen that the importance of digital competence in the current era is owned by librarians to support good performance in providing excellent information services to users.

Based on the explanation above, researchers are interested in comprehensively discussing the importance of developing librarian competencies in the digital era, and what abilities are needed by a librarian. This research aims to find out the urgency of competency development that librarians must have, and to find out what competencies are needed and even become demands for librarians and must be owned in today's digital era. It is hoped that the existence of libraries as institutions and librarians as the main actors in providing services to librarians can survive and adapt in the face of changing times.

Method

This research uses a qualitative method with a literature approach. Researchers collected a variety of literature in the form of books, and journal publications as well as previous research related to the research subject. Based on the literature collected, researchers developed what competencies librarians must have. The analysis technique in this study was carried out by researchers in several stages, including data reduction and presenting data which was then interpreted through data analysis.

Result and Discussion
1) Librarian in the Digital Age

Article 1 of the Library Law No. 43 of 2007 stipulates that a librarian is a person who has competencies obtained through librarianship education and training, and has the duties and responsibilities to manage and provide library services (Indonesia, 2007). Similarly, librarians according to ODLIS (Online Dictionary and Information Science) is "A professionally trained person responsible for the care of a library and its contents, including the selection, processing, and organization of materials and the delivery of information, instruction, and loan services to meet the needs of its users. In an online environment, the role of the librarian is to manage and mediate access to information which may exist only in electronic form" (Reitz, 2002). Likewise, Sulistyo Basuki explains that a librarian is someone who is able to provide services to the community in accordance with the objectives of the parent body and has knowledge and skills in the fields of library, documentation and information (Basuki, 2011).

Based on the above opinions, the definition of a librarian is a professional who is responsible for his librarianship duties in managing and providing services that are relevant to the needs of the library users. In this case, the role of librarians is very strategic to manage and disseminate information in order to participate in the intellectual life of the nation.

In this digital era, information has become an integral part of modern society, including in the context of libraries as places and sources of information. The role of librarians has also become more dynamic, not only as guides for visitors who need information, but also as technology users who can provide relevant and effective services. According to Oscar Berg, quoted in Sujatna (2018), there are six pillars that are interconnected in building a solid and strong foundation for the digital workspace. The following is an explanation of the six pillars:

a) Humans as the center

The digital age is characterized by the introduction and use of new technologies that require different qualifications, especially in the management of libraries and other information centers. The aim is to replace manual and conventional work with digital means. Digitization is the process of entering binary digital codes to produce information. The important role of librarians or information experts in this case is as the main actors in the use of information technology. They are the subject of every action taken by the library.

b) Mobility

In the digital era, librarians are encouraged to work with a high level of mobility because the digital world provides easy access to information. Librarians have the flexibility to work anywhere and anytime. This shows that the digital era has the potential to create professional and strong librarians in their fields, with high mobile working capabilities. In other words, with the digital world, librarians' work productivity can be improved.

c) Service system

The digital age is characterized by the rapid development of digital information in all aspects of life. Libraries face intense competition with other libraries. Every individual can become a source of information and display a personal collection virtually that can be accessed by anyone, anywhere, through online platforms. In addition, there are also many search engines that are easy to use as a tool to find information. One measure of the success of a library as an information resource center is the level of visits and the use of information owned by the library. Therefore, libraries must innovate to increase the number of visitors, so that the change from conventional libraries to digital libraries has greater meaning and benefits for the community.

d) Simplicity

In the digital age, people are provided with various conveniences that allow librarians to provide easy and simple services. This includes simplifying complicated processes, making difficult things easier, speeding up services to provide excellent service, and creating a family bond between patrons and librarians in the library. Librarians should be able to provide excellent services to add positive value in society, as well as create a conducive work environment.

e) Social

The social aspects of using technology are not as straightforward as the technology itself. Therefore, digital spaces must be designed according to human needs both as individuals and as members of work teams. There are five things that need to be considered to make digital spaces more humane:

1) Ensure that information is easily accessible to everyone.
2) Provide transparency in the process of extracting information, so that

people can understand and comprehend how the information was found.

3) Where possible, provide support for participation by individuals, as there will be a range of issues and opportunities encountered.

4) Provide space for dialog to enable effective communication and reach mutual understanding and agreement.

5) Recognize those who contribute and participate as a form of motivation.

By paying attention to these things, digital spaces can become more humanized and in line with human needs and social interactions.

f) Sustainability

Libraries and communities are interrelated and inseparable. Libraries serve as facilitators in the lifelong learning process. Therefore, it is necessary to empower libraries to influence society and become a community that promotes information awareness among the public. Librarians play a crucial role in managing the relationship between libraries and users. In achieving this, the competence of librarians is crucial, especially in the digital era, given that future library patrons will come from a generation that has been accustomed to digital technology since birth.

Overall, in the digital era the role of librarians becomes more complex and involves the application of technology in the management of libraries and information centers. Librarians must have a good understanding of digital library management systems and the ability to manage digital collections, such as e-books, electronic journals, and online databases. They need to have knowledge of licensing, access, and copyright management related to digital resources. Librarians play an important role in improving digital literacy among library users. They can provide training and support to users in using technology, navigating digital resources and developing information skills required in the digital age. In addition, librarians need to develop the ability to provide online services to users. They can use various online communication platforms, such as email, chat, or video conferencing, to assist users in finding information, providing references, or answering user questions. Data generated from library management systems and digital platforms can provide valuable insights for librarians. By analyzing reading interest patterns, usage trends, and user preferences, librarians can optimize collection management, develop relevant service programs, and improve the overall user experience. The digital age allows librarians to connect with other librarians online and engage in professional networking. They can share knowledge, experiences, and resources with other librarians around the world through online forums, discussion groups, or social media.

2) Librarian Competencies in the Digital Age

Libraries face several problems in today's digital era, one of which is the unlimited amount of information and the increasing complexity of today's data sources. Experienced librarians are needed to handle these problems. Competence is something that must be possessed by someone working in a particular position, such as knowledge of the job, problem-solving skills, and specific characteristics relevant to the position (Kismiyati, 2011). Meanwhile, according to Spencer and Spencer (Spencer & Spencer, 1993) competence is the basic nature of individuals and describes how they act or think, equalize situations, and provide support gradually. According to Wibowo (2016) librarian competencies consist of abilities, knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behavioral values to carry out tasks and provide services to visitors. When associated with librarians, librarian competence is the ability, knowledge and skills, attitudes, behavioral values, and characteristics possessed by a librarian to do his job and provide services to visitors known as librarian competence (Hermawan & Zen, 2010). Based on these opinions, it can be seen that the abilities, knowledge, and ways of acting that a library worker must have to do their job and provide services to users are known as librarian competencies.

Library personnel must meet standards and achieve organizational goals and objectives by having competencies including knowledge, skills, and good behavior (Nashihuddin & Aulianto, 2015). According to Spencer and Spencer's competency theory (Spencer & Spencer, 1993) there are five characteristics of competence that must be possessed, including:

a) Motive

Motive characteristics are the things a person wants or thinks that drive them to act known as motive characteristics.

b) Trait

Traits are characteristics that exist in a person and influence their behavior. Example: the ability to control emotions and solve problems are important traits for a successful manager.

c) Self-concept

Self-concept consists of a person's perspective of themselves, which includes their attitudes and principles. Example: self-confidence, a person's belief in his or her ability to act effectively in any situation.

d) Knowledge

Knowledge characteristic is a person's ability to understand something complex in a particular field.

e) Skill

Skill characteristics are a person's ability to do something well, both physically and mentally.

Furthermore, in order to become a qualified librarian, librarians should be entitled to achieve the specified competencies. There are two competencies that need to be improved and developed by a librarian, namely (Nanan, 2008):

a) Professional Potential

A librarian must have knowledge of management, technology, information and research.

b) Individual Potential

The ability of a librarian that must be owned in the form of attitudes, behavior to be a good communicator, update knowledge, and have the ability to adapt to changes and developments in the work environment.

In addition, according to Shapiro and Hughes in (Pendit, 2008) There are seven competencies that librarians must have in facing the digital era:

a) Tool literacy, is the ability to understand and skillfully use information technology. Using hardware, computer software and programs, and multimedia devices related to the field of work.

b) Resource literacy, is the ability to get the latest information from a network of information providers in various forms, formats, locations, and methods of obtaining it.

c) Social-structural literacy, is the ability to know how information comes from various parties in the community.

d) Research literacy, is the ability to operate information technology in a research context.

e) Publishing literacy, is the ability to use computers and the internet to disseminate scientific concepts and data to a wide audience.

f) Emerging technology literacy, is the ability to keep abreast of technological developments, which in turn will determine the direction of the use of information technology in the advancement of science.

g) Critical literacy, is the ability to critically assess the benefits and drawbacks of using information technology in scientific activities.

Based on the above description, librarians must have various competencies to manage and serve the library. Librarians must not only have skills in information communication technology and be able to compete with other librarians, but they must also be positive and flexible to adjust to changes. This is so that the existence of librarians is not eroded by the technological advances felt in the digital era. For this reason, the description of this competency can be a reference for librarians in carrying out their work. In addition, researchers agree with the statement above, that in the development of any era there will undoubtedly be no difficulty in adapting in order to realize the improvement of professional and optimal services to users. To be able to have these competencies does require effort and hard work from librarians, but if you realize that inevitably it must be done, then it will not feel heavy to do it.

3) Librarian Competency Development

Librarians have a strategic role in driving the wheels of librarianship, which makes them an important part of library success. To achieve this, librarians strive to develop their skills through several ways (Harsana, 2017):

a) Education

Increasing formal education is very important to improve the quality of library personnel. For librarians who are still educated in the D2 or D3 program, they should increase their knowledge to a higher level, S1 and S2 programs, both in the library field and other fields needed in the library. For university libraries that have a library science department, it is possible to include librarians in a "sitting" program, meaning that librarians are allowed to sit in lectures with regular students in certain courses to improve their knowledge, skills and professionalism without going through formal lectures. The improvement of librarians' knowledge is an important part of the progress of libraries in Indonesia, as further progress in libraries requires high-quality education of librarianship management and library human resources.

b) Training

Training is needed to improve the performance and productivity of the workforce in a particular field. Training focuses on the present and the future and helps librarians acquire the skills needed to perform specific jobs or tasks in a detailed and routine manner. In libraries, it is very necessary for librarians to improve their knowledge and skills, such as expertise in information and communication technology (ICT), information literacy which includes expertise in searching for reference sources online, utilizing several applications to help write scientific papers and automated library services, so that the development of technological advances can continue to be followed.

c) Internships and Experience Exchange

An apprenticeship is a type of on-the-job training used to work in positions that require higher skills and expertise. Because interns work in a chosen field, for a short period of time, and cost-effectively, these internship programs are sometimes more targeted. Libraries can offer internships. More advanced libraries can provide internship opportunities to libraries with less human resources, meaning that librarians can join these internship programs and exchange experiences at other libraries to learn from the experiences of other librarians.

d) Mutations

A transfer is the movement of an employee from one position, title or responsibility to another. This can be done vertically or horizontally. It aims to increase the potential of employees and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the library. Librarians who have been in the library or in certain services for a long time can be transferred to other libraries or sections of the library to broaden their horizons,

share experiences with librarians in new positions, and are advised to collaborate with each other for the progress of the original place or the new place they occupy.

e) Promotion

Promotion of these employees should be based on experience, expertise, or a combination of experience and expertise to improve their productivity, performance, and existence. Promotion is not just based on likes or dislikes, but for the improvement of the librarian's career. Initially ordinary staff, with a lot of experience, can be promoted to coordinator or head of field in their library.

f) Participation in Librarianship Activities

Librarians should participate in library-related events, such as attending seminars and workshops to learn the latest trends in the world of libraries and information. In addition, librarians should participate in book reviews, scientific paper competitions, outstanding librarian competitions, librarian training and become members of librarianship or professional organizations. By gaining more knowledge, librarians are expected to change their perspectives on library science, libraries, and the librarian profession.

g) Coaching

Coaching is a form of short-term training that involves a trainer or other supporter teaching an employee about specific things.

h) Rotation

Rotation is a job-based method of training employees. Employees are given the opportunity to learn and train for higher or equivalent positions by rotating their duties to other equivalent positions and activities. As part of this rotation, the aim is to broaden employees' horizons, reduce boredom, and find someone who is an expert and then assign them accordingly.

Based on the explanation above, it is clear that efforts to develop librarian competencies in this digital era are needed, so that they can help librarians do their jobs better and optimize their professionalism and improve the quality of their services to users in the library. Librarian competency development is a shared responsibility between librarians, government, and librarian professional organizations. By improving librarian competencies, libraries can continue to play an important role in society in the digital era.

4) The Urgency of Librarian Competency Development in the Digital Age

The digital era can be interpreted as a time when all behaviors and actions of society to knowledge and information are disseminated using digital technology. Being in the digital era, of course, the users have great expectations of the library as one of the providers and managers of information and its librarians to be able to provide and help obtain the information needed, both in digital form and in printed form. Therefore, libraries need competent library personnel in the library field who can meet the needs of technology and scientific development with these technologies that are all digital. In this context, development means improving, or developing an existing program of activities or plans with new ideas. Development is considered a change from the previous state. Likewise with the competence of librarians, already experts in certain fields or knowledge, must add knowledge and professionalism in other fields, especially those that are needed in the library.

Furthermore, what is the importance or purpose of librarian competency development? Among other things, it aims at:

a) To be better prepared to regenerate professional librarians in the future.

b) To create a library that is in accordance with the wishes of the community served.

c) To create librarians who are able to master information technology equally.

d) So that the image of librarians is no longer low in the eyes of library users(Hilda Safitri, 2017)

Thus, human resources in the library, especially librarians, must be able to accompany and adapt to the advances in information technology that are developing all the time. So that librarians can provide excellent service with competent resources.

Conclusion

In facing the advancement of information technology in the digital era, libraries as institutions and librarians as the spearhead of the continuity of librarianship tasks can adapt and adjust to the times and be able to survive their existence as information managers. Librarians need to continuously develop their competencies. They need to have a deep understanding of technology, online communication skills, and the ability to adapt to new technological developments that arise. By utilizing technology well, librarians can provide superior services to users and ensure that the library remains relevant in the digital era. that way the library is still visited with the availability of reliable librarians who are ready to serve there.

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