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# Practices and Challenges of the Professional Librarian Certification in Indonesia

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# Practices and Challenges of the Professional Librarian Certification in Indonesia

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## Abstract

*The paper deals with the practices and challenges of the certification program for professional librarians in Indonesia. The certification is regarded as the policy and strategy to enhance skills and competencies of professional librarians to transform libraries. The study provides descriptive analysis to explain the implementation of certification program in Indonesia from 2013-2017. The results of study show that the total of 3.039 librarians in Indonesia, 891 librarians (29%) has participated in the certification program. Moreover, the findings indicate that 646 librarians (72.5 %) are certified as competent while 245 librarians are not certified yet or not competent. These results imply that there are the challenges to increase the awareness and the participation of librarians in the certification program, and to strengthen the professional development program in order to accelerate the library transformation in Indonesia.*

**Keywords** - Professional Librarian Certification, Librarian Competencies Standard, National Library of Republic of Indonesia; Library Transformation

## Introduction

Recently the theme of library transformation has become a discussion among libraries in the world. There are at least two important reasons behind the need for transformed libraries. First, the emerging of information and communication technologies has been penetrating the library. It forces the libraries to transform their mindset from old paradigm to communication and technology based (Dewey, 2012; Woodward, 2013). The changing environment insists libraries to be more dynamic and innovative. Bailey & Tierney (2009) mentioned that library transformation is related to the library service innovations.

Second, the changing environment rise the awareness of libraries to revitalize their roles in global and national development. Libraries should contribute actively in all aspects of social transformation. In IFLA's document and agenda 2030 it was stated that libraries should increase access to information and knowledge and underpinne the universal literacy

to promote the sustainable development goals (SDG's). In Indonesia, the development of libraries is expected to contribute in the national development and SDG's particularly to enhance national literacy and to promote reading habit and interest. Literacy and reading habit are the foundation of transformations in societies.

However, professional skills and competencies of librarians are the key success of the library transformation. These skills and competencies are required to operate and manage the library programs or services as well as to make the libraries more dynamic and innovative. The certification of professional librarians is a strategy of professional development as well as a tool to assess their skills and competencies. The professional librarians are persons who are qualified and kept their skills and competencies up to date. The certification program, in this case, is a process to guarantee that librarians' skills and competencies are current and relevant the library functions.

This paper is aimed to provide explanations of the implementation of professional librarian certification program in Indonesia. It is a political strategy of National Library of Republic of Indonesia to enhance professional skills and competencies of librarians as well as to prepare them to contribute to the transformed libraries. The initiatives, policies, procedures, and practices of the certification are explored.

## **Theoretical Foundations**

### **1. Library Transformation and Librarian Certification**

In the last decade, the topic "library transformation" has been largely discussed by libraries in the world. In 2015, *International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions* (IFLA) has organized the World Library and Information Congress hold in Cape Town, South Africa, and the topic of "library transformation" was a central issue of the congress. The President of IFLA 2013-2015, Sipilä (2015) presented a paper entitled "*Strong Libraries, Strong Societies*" to emphasize the importance of libraries in the world to transform to be strong libraries. In her paper, she strongly argued that openness and equality are two keys of the transformed libraries. Libraries should develop their capacities to fulfil the community needs to information. This issue has encouraged the libraries in the world to re-think their roles in community development. Libraries are regarded not only technical institutions that provide and organize information but also social institutions that should play as the agent of social changes.

The issue of library transformation is reinforced in the IFLA World Library and Information Congress that will take place in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in August 2018. By the theme "transform libraries transform societies", the committee remind the libraries to revitalize their roles in societies. Libraries are expected to contribute to the national development and play proactively in all aspects of the social transformation. Karhula (2012) stated that there are three strategic issue relating to the library transformation, i.e rights to information access, inclusion balancing acts to the social problems due to financial crisis, and profession or advancing professional skills and competencies and the work of national library associations, especially in developing countries. However, transforming libraries is challenged by some factors such as financial support and human resources. As mentioned by Karhula (2012), *profession* or advancing professional skills and competencies is one of the main issues that should be a concern to transform the libraries.

The professional librarian certification is a key policy and strategic issue to guarantee the professional skills and competencies required to perform library functions based on the standard. By the certification program, knowledge, attitude, and skills of a librarian required to perform a specific task, are observed and assessed by using standard. Although the issue of professional certification for librarians is not really a new topic, the importance of professional certification, including in library and information field, has been becoming a hot issue especially in developing countries such as Philippines and Indonesia. This certification is crucial to demonstrate that librarians have fulfilled the skill and competency requirements to perform specific tasks in the library and information field.

## 2. The Librarian Certification in Indonesia

The certification as stated by International Organization for Standardization (ISO) is a process to achieve a recognition that individuals have met specific requirements to perform specific tasks. That requirements are stated on professional standard which is used for conformity assessment or certification. The certified professionals are persons who have fulfilled competencies required by the standard.

In Indonesia, the implementation of certification program is pointed by Library Act Number 43/2007. National Library of Indonesia has initiative to develop the standard for professional librarian competencies. In collaboration with Ministry of Manpower and also library associations in Indonesia, National Library of Indonesia has been formulated Indonesia National Working Standard for Libraries (SKKNI) which is used for the certification. This standard consists of the description of capabilities and competencies of professional librarians. It includes knowledge, skill, and attitude in doing particular library functions or tasks.

In practice, librarian certification program in Indonesia refers to Indonesia national certification system which is regulated by Indonesian Professional Certification Authority (BNSP). BNSP is an independent body to implement competency certification. Formed in 2003 by National Act on Workforce Number 13/2003, the main duty of this independent institution is to assure students and/or worker's competency quality and recognition of their competencies in all sectors including library workers in Indonesia through certification process.

Moreover, BNSP establishes and supports professional certification bodies (LSP) which are responsible to assess librarian's competencies based on the standard. Librarians who are able to fulfill the performance stated in the standard will be recognized and entitled to be certified librarians. A certificate of competency is accordingly awarded to librarians who pass the assessment in the certification processes.

## **Methodology**

The study was based on Indonesian experience in implementing certification program for professional librarian. Documents of the certification program and experiences were explored and analysed to comprehend the philosophical and practical foundation of the program. Interview with the participants of the assessment was also conducted to understand their responses regarding the certification program. Descriptive analysis was provided to display the results.

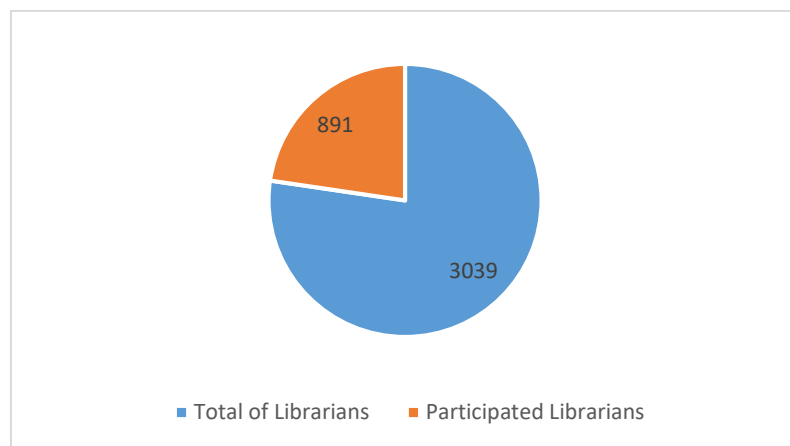
## Findings and Discussion

### 1. Findings

Indonesia has been conducting certification program since 2013 and keep progressing by these years. The program was initiated by National Library of Indonesia as government institution authoritaded to develop all kinds of library as well as librarian as recognize profession. Based on the study, it is found that there are 891 librarians who participated in the certification program from 2013 to 2017. Compared to the total number of librarians (3039 librarians) in Indonesia, it is only 29% who participated in the program.

Figure 1

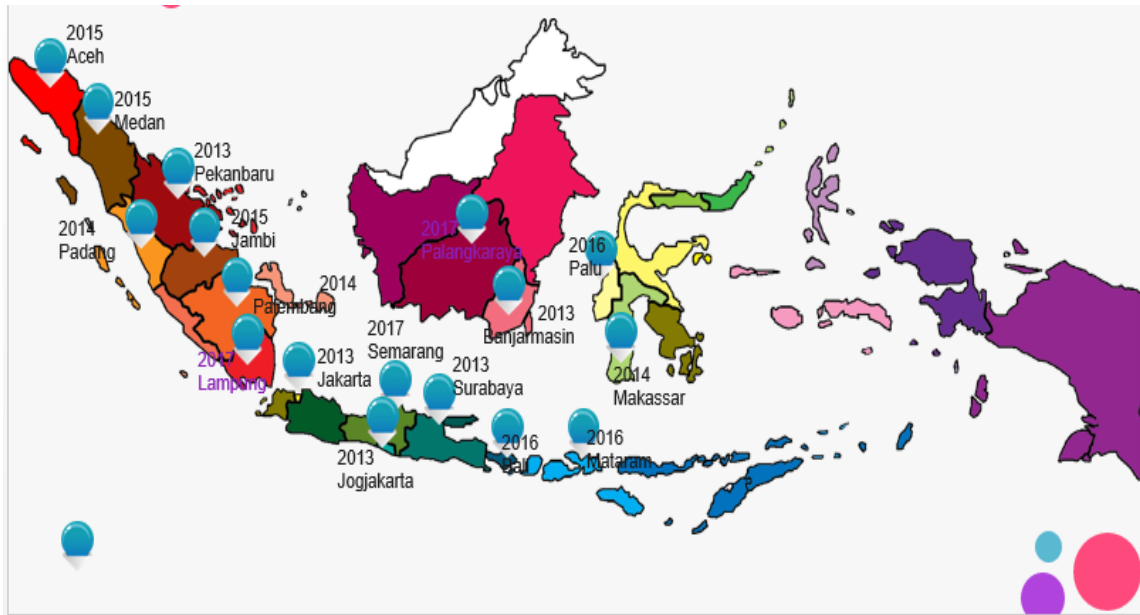
The total number of librarians and the participated librarians in certification program



Until 2017, the certification has been conducted in 17 provinces in Indonesia. The area distributions of certification program are depicted in the following figure.

Figure 2

Areas of the Certification



The degree of participation of librarians in the certification program are varies from province to others. The number of participants and its distribution of participants for each province is described in the following table.

Table 1

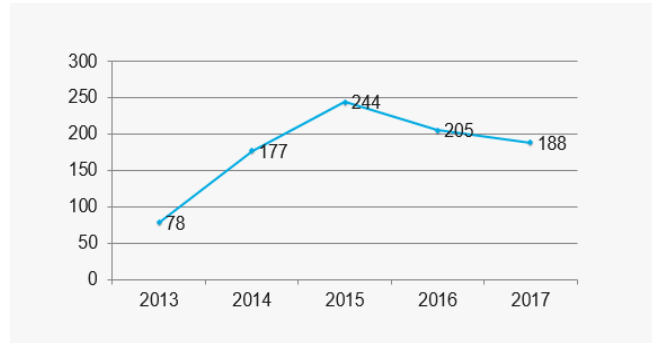
The number of participants in each provinces

NO	PROVINCES	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
1	JAKARTA	68	89	67	87	131
2	Yogyakarta	7	13	38	15	
3	Pekanbaru	9	10	15		
4	Banjarmasin	5	7			
5	Palembang		10	14		
6	Padang		10	17		
7	Makassar		12	13		
8	Surabaya		10	25	16	
9	Jambi			17		
10	Medan			23	20	
11	Aceh			16		
12	NTB				24	
13	BALI				22	
14	Palu				20	
15	Semarang					34
16	Palangkaraya					7
17	Lampung					16
	TOTAL	78	177	244	204	188

Based on Table 1, it is found that there is different number of participants for each year. While there is the increasing number of participants in the first three years from 78 participants in 2013 to 244 participants in 2015, the number of participants are decreasing

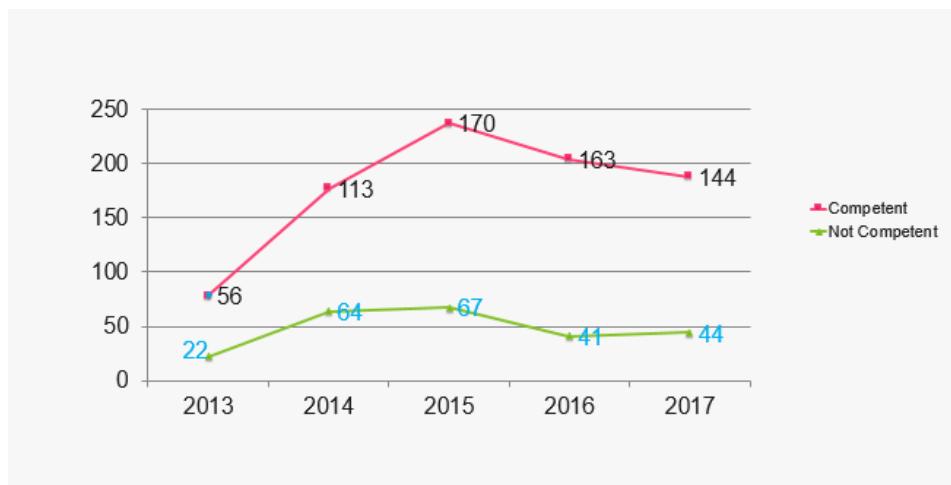
in the last two years, from 204 participants in 2016 to 188 participants in 2017. The trend of the number of participants for each year is described in the following figure.

Figure 3  
Trend of participant number for each year



The study also finds that only 646 librarians who were certified and recognized as competent librarians of the total 891 participants (72.5%). 245 remain librarians (27.5%) were not certified yet or not competent librarians. The number distributions of certified and not certified librarians in respective years are figured out in Figure 4.

Figure 4  
The number certified and not certified librarians



## 2. Discussion

The findings of study provide an explanation that the certification program has been challenged by low librarians participation. There are only 29% librarians involved in the program. Since the certification is voluntary program for librarians, they are not interested to the program (Riana, 2018; Sodikin, 2018). They are also apathetic to the program since there is no financial benefit/reward or additional incentive for certified librarians.

Moreover, the results of certification program indicate that there is a big challenging to enhance skills and competencies of librarians. From the total of 891 participants, there are 245 librarians or 27.5% who are not able to perform the tasks required for library

operations. This finding is relevant to Khan and Bhatti (2012) and Seena, S.T., & KG Pillai, S. (2014) who stated that lack of skills and competencies among librarians still become a big problem in libraries, especially in developing countries.

These are challenges for libraries in Indonesia to transform. To be transformed libraries, it requires to qualified and skilful librarians. As mentioned by Sipilä (2015), professional skills and competencies are the foundation of library transformation and certified librarians will guarantee these skill and competencies required to perform the tasks of library operations.

### **Limitations of the study**

This study describes the implementation of certification program for professional librarian in Indonesia. In particular, the focus of study to explore the participation of librarians in the certification program and to investigate the results of the assessment of librarians' skill and competencies (the number of certified and not certified librarians). Therefore, it was important to conduct further study to understand the factors influencing librarians to participate and/or not participate in the certification program, and the factors associated to the degree of librarians' competencies.

### **Implications**

*Practical implications* – This study will be useful for National Board for the Certification of Professional Librarian and to National Library Republic of Indonesia to arrange their program on the development of professional librarian competencies.

*Social implications* – The certification program plays strategic roles in transforming libraries to be leading institutions to contribute in the national development as well as to support the sustainable development goals.

### **Originality/value**

This study will be valuable to the National Library of Republic of Indonesia to evaluate the national program of library human resources development and in particular to examine the implementation of certification program for professional librarians.

### **Conclusion**

The certification program for professional librarians in Indonesia is challenged by reluctant or unwillingness librarians to take part in the program. This point added by next findings of unskillful librarians to accomplish their responsibilities. These problems will be constraint for library transformation in Indonesia. National Library of Indonesia should re-orientate their certification program to be more powerful and challenging in order to accelerate library transformation in Indonesia.



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