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The Role of Village Libraries to Improve Information Literacy in Rural Communities

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Abstract

Many efforts have been made to improve the quality of Indonesian society through reading habits. Information literacy movements are also carried out in rural areas. The library also took part in this activity. Many components already involved to enhance information literacy, but the results have not been maximized. The purposes of this study are to measure the level of information literacy in rural communities and to investigate the role of libraries to improve information literacy. The method was used quantitative method, whereby spreading questionnaires to the society in the village. The location was taken from three villages in Jombang – East Java, Indonesia, they are Tondowulan, Karanglo, and Padoroto. The Indicator of information literacy skill used indicator from UNESCO: Definition and articulation of information, Location and access of information, assesment of information, organization of information, use of information, and communication and ethical use of information. The results showed that overall the village community in Jombang did the definition and articulation of information needs, knew the location and how to access the information needed, assessed the information that had been found, organized the information that had been found, used information that had been found and stored and communicating and using information ethically. That means the village community already has a high level of literacy. In addition, the role of village libraries to improve information literacy in rural communities is to provide a place for a variety of positive activities such as basic live skills training, computer workshops, etc.

Keywords: Information literacy, village library, rural communities, Indonesia

Introduction

Indonesia is a wealthy country known for their natural resources to their human resources. Indonesia has a lot of strategic potential and has a tendency to be developed country. Report from Buku Gerakan Literasi Nasional (2017), McKinsey Global Institute placed Indonesia in one of the seven countries that has the most powerful economy in the world in 2030, raising a new optimism for the nation in increasing competitiveness and their team work in an international forum. This is proven by the index of global competitiveness; Indonesia is the most decent, which got 41st in place, among 138 countries. The data was quoted conducting on human resources shown that Human Development Index recently is on 113th place, out of 187 countries (UNDP, 2016), far from other ASEAN country rank. Meanwhile, on mastering literacy, Indonesia got 60th place from 61 countries (Central Connecticut State University, 2016). The result is not far from the result of student assessment on PISA 2015 (announced on the beginning of December 2016) that shows on

how Indonesia got 64th place out of 72 countries. For that reason, library empowerment is urgent to do.

The library has a major role on helping on raising the culture of information literacy amongst the society (Fourie, & Meyer, 2016; Jage & Nassimben, 2007; Davis, Lundstrom & Martin, 2011; Johnson, Sproles, Detmering, & English, 2012; Nielsen, & Borlund, 2011). Based on the data that were given from Kompasiana online, Indonesia has more than 250.000 libraries that are extent across the nation. Sadly, the amount of number that were given, only 10% that runs effectively, infact the amount of libraries that were close down and not properly run were also numerous. As in East Java, the data that were obtained were obtained from the Library and Archives mentioned that East Java has 3,135 village libraries amongst 8.501 villages. The village library has vision and mission for increasing the society literacy to empower a better quality of the society. When every part of society has the ability of information of literacy, there will be many advantages that they can gain for their daily life(Martin, 2011; Audunson, & Nordlie, 2003. Not only that, the skill on literacy is also needed in workfield(Zang, Majid, & Foo, 2010; Abiolu, & Okere, 2012).. The most important thing in informational literacy skill is *life long* learning, which is a learning of a lifetime (Solmaz, 2017). Therefore, the informational literacy skill must be obtained by society, from a high class society to a low class society.

Literature Review

The Stage of Social Literacy

According to the Merriam-Webster online dictionary, the word Literacy came from a latin term 'literature' and an English 'letter'. Literasi is a quality or an ability to be aware of alphabets/script that contains the ability to read and write. Aside from it, the meaning of literacy also included a visual awareness that has the meaning of "the ability to know and understand idead that are visually delivered (acts, video, and drawing)." National Institute for Literacy define Literacy as "An Individual ability to read, write, talk, calculate, and figuring out problems on a level of a decent skill in work, family, and society." This definition uses Literacy meaning on a perspective that is more contextual. It includes a meaning that the definition of Literacy is depending on a skill that is needed in a certain circumstances.

In addition, Education Development Center (EDC) statet that Literacy is more than an ability to read and write. However it is more about that, Literacy is an individual skill to uses all

the potential and skill that is contained in it. So, by understanding literacy, it includes the ability to read words and to read the world. Meanwhile, according to UNESCO, the ability to know the meaning of literacy is really influenced by the academic, institution, national context, cultural values, and also experiences. The general comprehension from literacy is a set of a real skill, especially a cognitive skill of reading and writing, regardless from a context which they got their skill, and from whom they had it.

UNESCO explained that the literacy skill is a right for every people, and it is a basic study to be kept for a lifetime. The literacy skill can empower and raise an individual quality, family, and society. Due to its “multiple effects” character or known as giving an effect in a wide area, the literacy skill helps to eradicate poverty, decreasing a child bereavement, growth population, and a guaranteed on-going development, and creating a peace. Illiterate, however, is an obstacle for a better quality of life. Currently, the terms of Literacy has been used by a broader meaning, for instance Information Literacy, Computer Literacy, Science Literacy, and all of them refers to the competence or a skill that is more than a skill of reading-writing.

There are many results that were done by the competent institution, whether it is nationally or internationally, either from government or a non-government institution, shows that the index of reading interests and the level of Indonesian literacy is really low and apprehensive. Therefore, many sides from the government, private, or even the society itself joined in helping to raise the awareness in society literacy in Indonesia. One of them is Gerakan Literasi Masyarakat (GLM), one of the National Literacy Movement that were developed by the Ministry of Education and Culture. Society literacy is one of the hope from the government, because when society has a decent literacy skill, it can affect to the growth of studying culture in a certain country.

The Indicator of a society literacy skill in this study was using an indicator from United Nations of Educational/ UNESCO (2008) which are 1.) The important of definition and articulation of information; 2.) Location and access of information, is an individual skill on finding an informational location and accessing on the information that were needed. 3.) Assessment of information which is an individual scoring on the founded information, either the information were reviewed based from its needs or not. The scoring of information is also done to know the truth from the information that was used to. 4.) Organization of information, is a skill that is owned by an individual, covering from organizing information that were found; 5.) Use of information, is owned by an individual in using the information was found 6.) Communication

and ethical use of information, is a skill that is owned by an individual to communicate and information that was found. Informational communication was done in many informational ways to the other person, done ethically and legal so it will not create a problem.

Method

This study used quantitative method to gain data from certain information literacy in villages, thus this study can illustrate the role of village libraries to improve information literacy in rural communities (Sugiono, 2013). The study was located in Jombang, East Java on three villages which are Tondowulan, Podoroto, and Karanglo in Jombang, East Java. This library controlled by Jombang Public Library. Jombang is one of the cities in East Java that has a big rural area and has an achievement due to their hardwork on raising the awareness of information literacy in their society. Quantitative data was achieved by spreading questionnaires to the society. This research took 150 respondents from three villages that were divided by their ages, which are teenagers, adults, and elders.

Findings

Society Literacy Stage

The villager in three villages in Jombang, East Java has become an the object of the study consisting of 14-73 year old people, therefore the age gap between citizen were obtained equally and did not add a certain age, most of them are early adult and adult compared to teenagers and elders. For the workfield amongst society, the study adds varieties of it, there are ten jobs amongst the villagers. These 10 workfields are teacher, housewives, investors, private employees, college student, student, farmer, entrepreneur, worker, and village coordinators. Choosing varieties of workfield and ages from the villages, it can illustrate the literacy amongst Jombang city, East Java. These are the results on society's literacy based on 6 indicators on measuring the literacy skill from UNESCO (2008):

Definition and articulation of information need

Skills on doing the definition and articulation on the informations that needed is important for the society, hence it can help and ease them on the beginning of searching the information. When the individuals had a definition and articulation on the information, thus they know whatever

information that they needed, so some errors in finding the information process has been minimalized. Indicators in literacy stages shown that, the entire village in Jombang has done definition and articulation for their needs of information. Around 77 respondents (51,7%) stated that they agreed on knowing what information that they needed. Around 73 respondents (49%) stated that they agreed to take the definition first for their first information. Around 6 respondents (51%) stated that they agreed on framing the information that they needed. Around 72 respondents (48,3%) stated that they agreed on identifying the source of the information that they are about to use. Around 72 respondents (48,3%) stated that they agreed on evaluating the types of information that they needed.

Location and access of information

The ability on finding the information of the location and accessing information that were needed is beneficial for to fasten the process of finding it. The access on the information is one of the strategies that is used on finding information, whether the digital sources or printed sources, finding it individually or asking for help towards others. The indicator on literacy stages shows that all of villagers in Jombang knows the location and how to access the information that is needed. Around 68% respondents (45,6%) stated that they agreed on taking some steps that is going to be use to find the right information. Around 68 respondents (45,6%) stated that they agreed on applying the strategy to seek through an effective information. Around 62 respondents (41,6%) stated that they agreed on asking someone to gain information that they needed. Around 65 respondents (43,6%) stated that they agreed on finding the right information individually. Around 6 respondents 45% stated that they agreed on finding the information on the internet. Around 77% respondents (51,7%) stated that they agreed on choosing and accurate information source rather than using other information. Around 84 respondents (56,4%) agreed that they used more than one sources. Around 65 respondents (43,6%) stated that they agreed on getting an easier access on the information that they needed. Around 77% respondents (51%) stated that they agreed on choosing an accurate source rather than other sources.

Assessment of information

The ability on assessing the founded information, either the information is suitable for the information or not. Taking an assessment was also done to know the truth from the previous

information that they used before. It is important due to the production information that is either right or wrong, combined as one. Whenever and individuals taking an assessment first, thus they can get a probability if they are using the right or wrong information. The indicator of literacy stages shows that all of the villagers in Jombang are doing assessment in the information that they found. Around 66% respondents (44,%) stated that they are doing an assessment based on the varieties of information that they found. Around 68 respondents (45,6%) stated that they agreed on distinguish between information that they found. Around 71% respondents (4.7%) stated that they agreed on differentiate each of the information sources that is used to search the information. Around 66 respondents (44,3%) suggest that they agreed on not using the information that has been found. Around 67% respondents (45.1%) stated that they agreed on doing an evaluation on the information that they have found.

Organization of information

The individuals ability on organizing information that has been found. This ability has a major role when it comes to a well-organized information, therefore the process of inventing back on information become easier and faster. Organizing information included the process of saving information so that the saving will be an important thing to be seek until giving a label to the information. The indicator literacy stage shows that all cillagers in Jombang were organizing their founded information. Approximately 82 respondents (55%) stated that they afreed on saving their founded information. Around 66 respondents (44.3%)stated that they afreed on saving the information, not only in one place (back up their information). Around 65 respondents (43.6%) stated that they agreed on classifying information suitable with the subject. Around 71 respondents (47.7%) stated that they afreed on not mixing the information with one saving. Around 60 respondents (40.3%) stated that they agreed on giving an information label on the saving. Around 69 respondents (46.3%) stated that they agreed on having an information easier if they are saved.

Use of information

The ability on using information that were found. This ability is one of the important thing because the information that has been found were more than one and not a rare information were found too many. It can help on choosing the information that we are about to use, either the information that has been found is going to use all, or is it enough to use a few information. The

indicator on literacy stage shows that all of the villager in Jombang use information that they found or saved. Around 68% respondents (45.6%) stated that they are agreed on using the information to solve the problem. Around 63 respondents (42.3%) stated that they agreed on using all of the information that they found. Around 89 respondents (59.7%) stated that they agreed on using a brand new information or an old one Around 71 respondents (47.7%) stated that they agreed on doing an interpretation on an information that they used.

Communication and ethical use of information

The ability on doing a communication on the exact information that has been found. It communicate on an information towards other people, done ethically and legally, so that it would not create a problem. Information that were found is not going to be own privately, but also shared towards others. The development of technology, information, and communication, is getting more advance on making an easier and faster process, so that people can access the information faster in order to determine it, wether it is good or bad. In this stage, the indicator of literacy shows that all of the villager in Jombang communicates and use the information ethically. Around 84 respondents (56.4%) stated that they agreed on communicating the information that were found effectively towards others. Around 8 respondents (52.3%) agreed that they share the information towards those who needed it. Around 68 respondents (45.6%) stated that they agreed on using the media as a connection to share the information. Around 65 respondents (43.6%) stated that they agreed on choosing the information first before they share to to others. Around 60 respondents (41.3%) stated that they agreed on sharing the information that has been qualified its truth.

Discussion

The vision and mission of village library, Tondowulan, Karanglo and Podoroto, is to implement library management based on information and communication technology. The village library also trying to adjust with the era, whereby information and communication technology is growing rapidly. Whereas village libraries have a responsibility to provide information services to all communities in the village area (Hoq, 2014).

The village libraries aim is to make villagers more empowered by increasing information literacy. Based on the findings of the research on the level of community literacy, it shows that overall the villagers in Jombang have used the technology in their daily life in seeking information

to solve problems in terms of work, school or others. Technology is very close to the life of society becomes something that can not be separated (Webster, 2010; Anderson, 2012). Only people who are in the elderly age group who do not use a technology, while the other age groups are accustomed to using technology.

The librarians and staffs from the village library should know how the information literacy of the community affects the needs of the users. When the village library has known it, then the library can improve their quality of service to the community. That is way libraries can be referred to as user-oriented libraries (Connaway, 2015).

The results showed that overall the village community in Jombang did the definition and articulation of information needs, knew the location and how to access the information needed, assessed the information that had been found, organized the information that had been found, used information that had been found and stored and communicating and using information ethically. That means the village community already has a high level of literacy. In addition, the role of village libraries to improve information literacy in rural communities is to provide a place for a variety of positive activities such as basic live skills training, computer workshops, etc.

Conclusion

In improving the quality of village libraries is not only supported by the number of collections provided and the existing infrastructure, but also the competence and capacity of librarians. Thus, good and bad library services depend on it. It is necessary to build capacity of librarian to gain new knowledge and skills that are appropriate to the conditions of the community as users in the village library. One of the purpose village library is to increase the information literacy among society, so that the capacity of librarians should be adjusted to the condition of community in the rural area. This study focuses on the efforts and the steps of the village library to achieve the information literacy in the rural community. Recommendation for the next research is to investigate the capacity building of society in the rural community. It is hope the library can give best service to them.

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