

Librarian Competency Development in Supporting Education Management and Collaborative Learning in Schools

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the strategic role of school librarians in supporting educational management and collaborative learning. In this context, librarians serve as learning facilitators, not only managing reading materials but also assisting students and teachers in accessing information and developing essential information literacy and critical thinking skills in the digital age. The research findings indicate that competent school librarians are able to serve as a bridge between learning resources and students' learning needs. However, the development of librarians' competencies is still hindered by the limited availability of specialized training programs and inadequate infrastructure support from the school. As a result, some librarians remain stuck in traditional administrative roles and are less effective in facilitating collaborative learning. To address this issue, the study recommends implementing ongoing digital literacy training for librarians, strengthening collaboration between librarians and teachers, and enhancing infrastructure support from the school. By applying these strategies, it is hoped that librarians can play a more effective role in supporting educational management and creating a dynamic collaborative learning environment, ultimately improving the quality of education in schools.



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INTRODUCTION

In the era of rapid development of information and communication technology, schools in Indonesia face significant challenges in managing education and learning that are relevant to the needs of the times. This demands an enhancement of librarian competencies, who are not only responsible for managing book collections but also act as facilitators and supporters in teaching and learning activities. The competencies of librarians in the educational context include the ability to manage information efficiently, provide reference services, and support the development of information literacy for both students and teachers. As part of educational management, librarians also play a crucial role in building a collaborative learning system that encourages interaction among students, teachers, and diverse learning resources (Saputra, 2020; Widodo, 2021).

Librarian competencies in schools are essential because information literacy has now become a key component of 21st-century education, which emphasizes students' critical ability to access, evaluate, and effectively use information (Sari & Haryanto, 2019). School librarians are often overlooked as human resources, even though they have great potential to support the transformation of education through providing relevant information, offering guidance in research, and engaging in collaborative learning projects. With support from librarians who possess good competencies, schools can enhance the quality of research-based and literacy-driven learning. For example, in collaborative learning, librarians not only provide books or references but also actively participate in the learning process by assisting students and teachers in finding and understanding the information they need (Rahmawati, 2021).

This is in line with the concept of modern educational management, which prioritizes the integration of librarians' roles in the learning process, especially in supporting students' digital literacy skills, which are increasingly essential (Indriani & Siregar, 2020). As their role becomes more strategic, school librarians need to develop several specific competencies. First, information literacy competency, which allows them to help students select, analyze, and process information from various sources.

Second, information technology competency, which enables librarians to utilize library management software and various digital media to support teaching and learning activities. Third, communication and collaboration skills with other educators to ensure the librarian's role as a facilitator and coordinator of collaborative learning is achieved optimally (Handayani, 2019; Priyanto, 2021).

With the mastery of these competencies, school librarians can become one of the key pillars in creating an open, dynamic, and interactive learning environment. On the other hand, challenges such as the lack of training and support from school management often hinder the development of librarian competencies. Research shows that specialized training programs for school librarians are still limited, meaning many librarians do not have the necessary capacity to play an active role in educational management and collaborative learning (Purwanto & Lestari, 2020).

Therefore, it is crucial to formulate strategies for developing librarian competencies that include providing training tailored to their needs, as well as ongoing support from school management. Additionally, collaboration between school libraries and teachers needs to be strengthened to create synergy in the learning process, ensuring that libraries are not just places for storing books but also canters for literacy activities that support collaborative learning (Kurniawan, 2022). The development of librarian competencies, supported by appropriate educational policies, will enable school libraries to become collaborative spaces where teachers and students can work together to explore various learning resources. This will undoubtedly have a positive impact on achieving educational goals, namely producing students who are critical, creative, and able to adapt to global developments (Lestari, 2021).

This study aims to analyse the role of librarians in supporting educational management and collaborative learning in schools, as well as to identify the competencies that need to be developed for librarians to play an optimal role in supporting these objectives. The study also seeks to examine the factors that support and hinder the development of librarian competencies, and to formulate effective strategies to improve these competencies in order to support the success of educational management in schools.

RESEARCH METHODS

According to several experts, qualitative research is a research method that focuses on the collection of descriptive data in the form of words, both spoken and written, which describe the behavior of individuals in a comprehensive manner (Abdussamad, 2021). In this context, the researcher chooses a field research approach, which involves direct observation of the behavior of individuals or groups to identify characteristics and habits that develop in a particular environment. Through this approach, the researcher can provide a deeper understanding of the situation occurring in the field. This approach is relevant for exploring the role of librarians in supporting educational management and collaborative learning in schools, with the aim of providing a comprehensive understanding of librarian competencies and their contribution to the educational environment in schools.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study show that the role of librarians in supporting educational management and collaborative learning in schools is highly significant, but they still face several challenges.

1. The Role of School Librarians as Learning Facilitators and Information Literacy Supporters in Collaborative Educational Management

In supporting educational management, school librarians play a role not only as custodians of book collections but also as active learning facilitators. Librarians assist students and teachers in searching for and accessing information, provide relevant references, and offer support in developing the information literacy needed for the teaching and learning process (Yusri et al., 2021). According to research conducted by Sari et al. (2020), competent librarians are able to help students develop critical thinking skills and digital literacy, which are essential in the era of information technology.

In collaborative learning, librarians act as connectors that bring together learning resources with learning needs, and in some cases, even facilitate interactive group learning projects. Thus, librarians

with these abilities contribute directly to creating a dynamic learning environment that supports the holistic development of students (Rahman & Dewi, 2019).

2. Overcoming Barriers in the Development of Librarians' Competencies for Collaborative Learning

However, this study also identifies several barriers in the development of librarians' competencies. The main barrier found is the limited number of specialized training programs for school librarians, which makes it difficult for them to update their knowledge and skills in digital literacy and the latest information technology (Utami, 2021). In addition, the lack of support from the school administration in providing adequate resources or facilities for the library also hinders librarians in performing their roles optimally. As a result, some librarians are still trapped in their traditional roles and have not been able to serve as facilitators of collaborative learning (Fitriana & Susanto, 2019). These barriers need to be addressed with policies and more intensive training programs to support the development of librarians' competencies in schools.

Based on these findings, several effective strategies are recommended to improve librarians' competencies in schools. First, continuous training programs focusing on enhancing digital literacy and information technology skills need to be developed so that librarians can keep up with the latest educational technologies and methodologies (Hidayat et al., 2020). Second, cooperation between librarians and teachers needs to be strengthened to create synergy in collaborative learning. Through this collaboration, librarians can more easily identify learning needs and provide the appropriate support for both students and teachers (Kusuma & Handayani, 2019). Third, support from the school management in the form of resource allocation and adequate facilities is crucial to support the librarian's role as part of the educational team. With these strategies, it is expected that librarians' competencies in schools can develop optimally, thereby supporting educational management and encouraging effective collaborative learning for students (Putri & Ramadhani, 2021)..

DISCUSSION

The discussion of this study reveals that the role of school librarians as key supporters in educational management and collaborative learning is increasingly relevant in the modern era. Librarians are not only expected to manage reading collections, but also to be active facilitators in learning, particularly in supporting information literacy and the development of students' critical thinking skills (Rahmawati, 2021). At this point, librarians function as mediators between information sources and learners, as well as connectors between teachers and students to meet learning needs (Putri & Ramadhani, 2020). In this collaborative role, librarians work with teachers to design learning strategies that involve students more actively, such as project-based learning or assignments that involve literature research. This greatly supports an educational process that focuses not only on academic achievement but also on the development of students' critical thinking and problem-solving abilities (Saputra & Dewi, 2019).

However, this study also highlights several factors that hinder the development of librarians' competencies. One major barrier is the lack of specialized training that can help librarians understand and implement the latest information technologies in the learning process. In many schools, librarians have not fully mastered digital tools or library management systems that facilitate students' access to information. This is due to the limited training programs available, both from the government and the schools themselves, specifically aimed at developing librarians' competencies in digital literacy (Utami, 2021). As a result, librarians are often still trapped in traditional administrative roles and struggle to fully support collaborative learning (Hidayat et al., 2020).

In addition to training barriers, the study found that infrastructure support from school management is often inadequate. Some school libraries still lack basic facilities that support learning, such as stable internet access, computers, or dedicated spaces for collaborative learning activities. Without adequate infrastructure support, librarians face limitations in innovating and contributing to the collaborative learning process that is expected (Kusuma & Handayani, 2019).

To address these challenges, this study recommends several strategies. First, there is a need for ongoing training programs for school librarians that focus on digital literacy skills, information

management, and the ability to collaborate with teachers. These programs could be conducted through partnerships between educational institutions and related agencies, such as local library services or professional training organizations (Yusri et al., 2021). Second, schools are encouraged to strengthen cooperation between librarians and other educators to develop a curriculum integrated with the library as a learning center. This can be achieved through regular meetings or discussion forums among teachers and librarians to design collaborative learning strategies (Sari et al., 2020). Third, schools should be able to provide adequate facilities to support librarians' roles in collaborative learning environments, such as project-based learning spaces, internet connectivity, and access to digital information resources (Fitriana & Susanto, 2019).

By implementing these strategies, librarians in schools can more effectively support educational management and collaborative learning. The development of librarians' competencies will support schools' success in preparing students to face challenges in the digital age, particularly in information literacy, critical thinking skills, and collaboration. The findings of this study indicate that the development of librarians' competencies not only benefits the librarians themselves but also has a widespread impact on the overall success of education in schools (Rahman & Dewi, 2019).

CONCLUSION

The important role of school librarians in supporting educational management and collaborative learning is evident. Librarians are not only responsible for managing collections of reading materials but also act as learning facilitators, helping both students and teachers access information and develop information literacy and critical thinking skills. However, this role is still hindered by several challenges, including the limited availability of specialized training programs for librarians and the lack of infrastructure support from the school. These conditions cause some librarians to remain stuck in traditional administrative roles and fail to fully optimize their role as facilitators of collaborative learning.

To overcome these challenges, several strategies are recommended, such as providing ongoing digital literacy training for librarians, strengthening collaboration between librarians and teachers, and improving infrastructure support from the school. With more intensive policies and training programs, it is hoped that librarians will be able to develop the necessary competencies to optimally support educational management and collaborative learning. The findings of this study indicate that the development of librarians' competencies not only contributes to improving their performance but also positively impacts the overall success of education in schools.

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