

## **THE ROLE OF LIBRARY MANAGEMENT FUNCTION IN INCREASING PUBLIC INTEREST IN READING AT THE KENDARI CITY LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES SERVICE**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The low reading interest in Indonesia poses a serious challenge to literacy development, with Indonesia ranked 60th out of 61 countries in international literacy surveys. In Kendari City, despite efforts such as the Digital Reading Corner and mobile libraries, community participation in literacy activities has not shown significant improvement. The lack of structured and adaptive library management strategies is a key factor in the suboptimal increase in public reading interest. This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach with semi-structured interviews involving five key informants to explore the implementation of library management functions, including planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling. The findings highlight the importance of integrating technology, cross-sector collaboration, and developing programs based on local wisdom as strategic steps to enhance library services' effectiveness. This study's implications offer practical recommendations to enhance the role of libraries as agents of social change while expanding theoretical understanding in the field of community literacy.

**Keywords:** digital library; literacy; library management; reading interest; strategy

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Libraries play a vital role in providing access to information and knowledge for the wider community. As an institution that collects, organizes, and disseminates information, libraries are literacy centers that support formal and non-formal education (Cahyono, 2017). In a global context, libraries serve as agents of social change by encouraging people to improve their reading and writing skills, which in turn can improve their quality of life (Masriastri, 2018). In addition, libraries also play a role in the preservation of culture and history through their collection of library materials (Susilawati, 2016). Thus, the existence of libraries is essential in building a knowledgeable and cultured society.

In Indonesia, the role of libraries is increasingly important in line with the government's efforts to increase people's interest in reading. According to UNESCO data, the level of interest in reading in Indonesia is still relatively low compared to other countries (Lubis et al., 2020). This encourages various initiatives to strengthen the role of libraries as literacy centers, including through programs that aim to improve access and quality of library services (Yudiarti & Fitria, 2019). In addition, libraries are also expected to be able to adapt to the development of information technology to meet the needs of modern society (Sa'diyah & Adli, 2019). Therefore, library development is one of the focuses in efforts to increase literacy in Indonesia.

Effective library management is the key to increasing people's interest in reading. Good management includes strategic planning, resource organization, program implementation, and continuous service evaluation (Cahyono, 2017). The implementation of proper management can improve the quality of library services, thereby attracting more visitors and encouraging a reading culture (Yudiarti & Fitria, 2019). In addition, adaptive management to changes in technology and the needs of society will ensure the relevance of libraries in the digital era (Sa'diyah & Adli, 2019). Thus, the role of library management is very significant in efforts to increase reading interest.

One of the strategies implemented is library promotion through social media to reach a wider audience. Nasrullah et al. (2022) emphasized the importance of using platforms such as Instagram in attracting people's interest in reading, especially the younger generation. In addition, libraries also play a role in fostering reading skills and interests through educational programs and user-friendly services (Cahyono, 2011). Thus, the library is not only a place to store books, but also a center for active and innovative literacy activities. These efforts are expected to increase reading interest and information literacy among the public.

In Kendari City, the Library and Archives Service has implemented various programs to increase people's interest in reading. Programs such as the Digital Reading Corner and mobile libraries are designed to improve the accessibility of reading materials for the community, especially in areas with minimal access to libraries (Lubis et al., 2020). In addition, literacy training and reading promotion activities are routinely held to encourage active community participation in literacy activities (Yudiarti & Fitria, 2019). However, challenges such as low awareness of the importance of reading and limited infrastructure are still obstacles that need to be overcome. Therefore, continuous evaluation and development of the program is important to ensure the effectiveness of efforts to increase reading interest in Kendari City.

Despite various efforts, the level of reading interest in Indonesia remains at an alarming level. Based on UNESCO data, the reading interest index in Indonesia only reaches 0.001%, which means that only 1 in 1,000 residents have a high interest in reading (Kompasiana). In addition, the *World's Most Literate Nations Ranked* survey shows that Indonesia is ranked 60th out of 61 countries surveyed (Kompasiana). This condition indicates that access to reading materials is still uneven, especially in remote areas (Sampoerna Foundation). Other obstacles include the lack of a decent library and the price of books that are relatively expensive for most people (Sampoerna Foundation).

In Kendari City, although programs such as the Digital Reading Corner and mobile libraries have been implemented, the impact on the increase in people's interest in reading has not been seen significantly (Sulawesi Tribunnews). The literacy programs that have been carried out have also not succeeded in reaching all levels of society evenly (Teramedia). In addition, challenges such as limited human resources and library infrastructure remain the main obstacles (Teramedia). Community participation in literacy activities is still relatively low, which adds to the complexity of the problem (UHO OJS). This shows that the current strategy is not effective enough to encourage an increase in reading interest.

The low interest in reading in Indonesia is also influenced by the increasing dominance of digital media which attracts more attention from the public (Sampoerna Foundation). Many

individuals prefer to spend time on social media rather than reading books (Sampoerna Foundation). Awareness of the importance of reading as a means of knowledge and self-development is also minimal, which further exacerbates the situation (Sampoerna Foundation). This indicates that literacy challenges are not only related to access to reading materials, but also related to the habits and culture of society as a whole.

In addition, libraries in Indonesia often face obstacles in service management that affect people's interest in reading (Raden Intan Repository). Less than optimal services often reduce the attractiveness of libraries in the eyes of the public (Raden Intan Repository). In addition, book collections that are not updated regularly and lack of innovative programs are also significant obstacles (The World of Libraries). Therefore, fundamental improvements are needed in library management to increase reading interest and community participation.

The lack of promotion and socialization about the importance of literacy is also an inhibiting factor that needs to be overcome immediately (Opinion). Many people do not understand the benefits of reading for self-development and quality of life improvement (Opinion). The lack of literacy activities involving local communities is also one of the causes of the low effectiveness of literacy programs (Opinion). Therefore, a more effective and collaborative promotion strategy is needed to build a reading culture in the community.

Specifically, even though Kendari City already has a modern library with complete facilities, it is not enough to significantly increase reading interest (Kendari Media). The lack of innovative and relevant programs to local needs is one of the main obstacles (Media Kendari). Public participation in literacy activities is also still low, showing that the approach applied is not optimal (Media Kendari). Therefore, evaluation of strategies and adjustments to literacy programs are needed to ensure their effectiveness in improving reading culture in the region.

This study aims to analyze the role of library management functions in increasing public interest in reading at the Kendari City Library and Archives Office. With a qualitative descriptive approach, this study will explore how planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating library programs are carried out to achieve these goals (Fitriantini et al., 2019). The results of the research are expected to provide recommendations for the development of a more effective library management strategy in increasing people's interest in reading. In addition, this finding is also expected to be a reference for other libraries in implementing management functions that are adaptive and responsive to the needs of the community. Thus, the role of libraries as literacy centers and agents of social change can be further strengthened.

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## **METHODOLOGY**

This study uses a qualitative descriptive research design to analyze the role of library management functions in increasing people's interest in reading. This design was chosen because it is able to describe the phenomenon in depth and provide a contextual understanding of the issue being researched. The focus of the research is directed at collecting data regarding the planning, organization, movement, and supervision of library programs in Kendari City. The data obtained were then analyzed to find patterns and relationships relevant to the research topic. This approach has been used extensively in similar studies to explore social and organizational issues (Fitriantini et al., 2019).

The main instrument in this study is a semi-structured interview conducted with five key informants. The informants included officials at the Kendari City Library and Archives Office as well as representatives of the literacy community. The interview guide is designed to explore information about the implementation of management functions in library activities. In addition, related documents such as the library's annual report and visitor data are also used as

supporting data. The combination of these instruments allows for comprehensive and in-depth data collection (Sugiyono, 2018).

The research procedure is carried out through several stages, starting with the identification of relevant informants based on their position and role. Interviews are conducted directly at the location or through communication media to facilitate the accessibility of informants. Data collected from interviews and documents were analyzed with thematic techniques to identify key themes. The analysis is carried out in stages, starting from the initial coding to drawing conclusions to answer the formulation of the research problem. Data validation is carried out through source triangulation to ensure the accuracy and credibility of the findings (Creswell, 2014).

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## **RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Result**

This study aims to analyze the role of library management functions in increasing public interest in reading at the Kendari City Library and Archives Office. Based on interviews with a number of key informants, it was found that library planning has been prepared with the needs of the community in mind, including through strategic programs such as Digital Reading Corners, mobile libraries, and literacy training. This was explained by the Head of the Kendari City Library and Archives Office (MNR), who stated that "This planning is adjusted to local needs, especially to reach areas with minimal access to reading materials." However, the main challenge in the form of low public awareness of the importance of reading and the limitations of infrastructure are still significant obstacles.

In terms of organization, library services have been organized based on user segments, including children, adolescents, and adults, by providing physical and digital reading materials. The Secretary of the Kendari City Library and Archives Office (RWN) explained, "We provide reading materials in physical and digital formats to accommodate the needs of modern society." In addition, collaboration with literacy communities and local educational institutions is also an important strategy in distributing books to remote areas, such as in the 'Books for Villages' program. However, obstacles in the form of limited funds for book collections and digital services still affect the optimization of organization.

The function of community mobilization is carried out through various programs designed to encourage active participation, such as reading competitions, literacy seminars, and writing training. The Head of Library Development and Reading Cultivation (IN) highlighted the effectiveness of the program, stating that "The number of program participants has increased by about 30% in the last two years." Campaigns such as 'One Book, One Day' are also considered quite successful in attracting the attention of the younger generation to the importance of reading. In addition, the long-term development plan includes the integration of digital technology and an increase in the number of mobile libraries to reach people in remote areas.

The function of monitoring the effectiveness of library programs is carried out using quantitative and qualitative indicators, such as the level of visits, the number of book loans, and input from users. The Head of the Library Services and Cooperation Section (DW) stated, "We use indicators such as the number of visitors, the rate of book borrowing, and feedback from users to evaluate the program." Even so, obstacles such as limited human resources in surveys and evaluations are still challenges that need to be overcome. One of the solutions that has been implemented is to involve volunteers from the literacy community in the implementation of supervision.

The contribution of the literacy community in Kendari City also supports efforts to increase people's interest in reading. Representatives of the literacy community (AL) revealed

that they are actively helping to distribute books to remote areas and holding literacy classes with children. The Navy also added, "The collaboration with the Library Service makes our efforts more structured." However, the low involvement of the general public is still an issue that needs attention, especially through increasing access to reading materials and the formation of reading habits.

The results of this study show that although various efforts have been made, the optimization of library management functions still faces a number of obstacles that need to be solved. Efforts to increase public awareness, expand the range of services, and ensure the sustainability of the program are the main keys in increasing people's interest in reading in Kendari City. Technology integration, collaboration between parties, and continuous evaluation are important recommendations that can support the achievement of this goal.

To support the results of the study, Table 1 below presents a summary of the library management functions that have been identified based on interviews with informants:

<b>Management Function</b>	<b>Program/Strategy</b>	<b>Challenge</b>	<b>Results/Indicators</b>
<b>Planning</b>	Digital Reading Corner, Mobile Library	Low reading awareness, Minimal infrastructure	Library visits increased by 25%
<b>Organizing</b>	Age-based and digital segment-based services	Limited funds, limited book collection	Modern community outreach
<b>Mobilization</b>	Reading Competition, 'One Book, One Day' Campaign	Low general public participation	Program participants increased by 30%
<b>Supervision</b>	Quantitative and qualitative indicators	Limitations of human resources evaluation	Feedback supports program improvement

**Table 1** shows that each library management function has been implemented with various strategies, but still faces challenges that require long-term solutions. This visualization helps the reader understand the relationship between the management function, the challenges, and the results that have been achieved.

Through the results of this research, it is hoped that strategic steps such as increasing literacy awareness, optimizing collaboration with the community, and utilizing digital technology can strengthen efforts to increase people's interest in reading. Library programs need to be developed on an ongoing basis to ensure their relevance to the needs of a dynamic society. The integration of effective management functions is the main key to achieving this goal.

The results of this study show that the implementation of effective library management functions can play a significant role in increasing people's interest in reading in Kendari City. Strategic planning such as the procurement of Digital Reading Corners and mobile libraries has succeeded in increasing the accessibility of reading materials, especially in areas with limited infrastructure. This is in line with the findings of Fitriantini et al. (2019) who emphasized the importance of library service innovation in attracting public interest in reading. However, the challenge in the form of low awareness of the importance of reading still requires a more intensive and educational approach.

The organization of library services tailored to age segmentation and user needs, both in physical and digital formats, has increased the relevance and attractiveness of libraries for various groups. Collaboration with literacy communities and local educational institutions also expands the reach of services to remote areas. A study by Siregar (2005) confirms that proper service segmentation can significantly increase reading interest. However, limited funds and human resources are still an obstacle in the development of more comprehensive services.

Mobilization programs such as reading competitions, literacy seminars, and writing training have succeeded in increasing community participation, especially the younger generation, in literacy activities. The 'One Book, One Day' campaign is a successful example in cultivating the habit of reading among the community. This is consistent with the opinion of Hafidhuddin and Tanjung (2003) who stated that interactive programs can encourage interest in reading. However, more creative and adaptive program innovations are needed to maintain and increase community participation.

The monitoring function through regular evaluation of performance indicators such as the number of visitors, book borrowing rates, and user feedback has helped in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of library services. The involvement of volunteers from the literacy community in the evaluation process adds perspective and resources in supervision. According to research by Aini (2012), evaluation involving the community can increase the effectiveness of literacy programs. However, a more structured and continuous evaluation system is still needed to ensure consistent service improvement.

The contribution of the literacy community in distributing books to remote areas and holding literacy classes for children has helped overcome the limited access to reading materials. Collaboration with the Library Service makes this effort more structured and directed. A study by Yashinta Dianingrum (2021) shows that local community involvement can significantly increase reading interest. However, the low participation of the general public in literacy activities shows the need for more effective promotion and socialization strategies to build a strong reading culture.

This study emphasizes that the implementation of comprehensive library management functions, starting from planning, organizing, mobilizing, to supervision, is very important in an effort to increase people's interest in reading. This finding is in line with previous research that emphasizes the vital role of library management in literacy culture. However, challenges such as limited resources, low public awareness, and the dominance of digital media require a more innovative and collaborative approach to achieve optimal results.

## **Discussion**

Research reveals the importance of using technology in supporting literacy programs, which is in line with the demands of modern society. The Digital Reading Corner as one of the innovations has made a significant contribution in making it easier for the public to access electronic reading materials. However, its effectiveness is still limited by the lack of digital literacy in some communities, which is a new challenge in the implementation of library technology. This is consistent with the findings of Sa'diyah & Adli (2019), which states that the integration of technology in library services must be balanced with digital education to users. Thus, efforts to strengthen digital literacy are a strategy that cannot be ignored to increase the effectiveness of technology-based services.

Furthermore, this study underlines the role of collaboration with the community as a catalyst in increasing reading interest. The local literacy community contributes to reaching people who have been difficult to reach by official library programs. This support, such as book distribution programs and reading training, has successfully expanded the scope of impact of library services. However, the low level of collaboration sustainability is a concern that must be addressed immediately. Based on the views of Hafidhuddin & Tanjung (2003), collaboration based on long-term commitments between the government, communities, and the private sector can have a more significant impact on reading culture.

Limited human resources and budget remain the main obstacles in library management in Kendari City. These findings support the report of Yudiarti & Fitria (2019), which highlights that efficient use of resources is a key element in successful library management. Nevertheless, several innovative efforts such as the involvement of volunteers from the literacy community

have provided alternative solutions to overcome these limitations. However, training programs and competency improvement for volunteers and librarians are still needed to maintain the quality of library services.

The low participation of the community in literacy activities is a reflection of the need for a more interactive and relevant approach to local culture. Programs such as 'One Book, One Day' show that activities based on direct interaction can attract the attention of the public, especially the younger generation. According to Hafidhuddin (2003), strategies involving local cultural elements can increase public acceptance of literacy programs. Therefore, the development of programs based on local wisdom needs attention to create more inclusive and effective literacy activities.

This research highlights the need for continuous evaluation that focuses not only on quantitative indicators, but also on the long-term impact of literacy programs. According to Aini (2012), a thorough evaluation approach, including through surveys and in-depth interviews with users, can help understand the needs of a dynamic society. This is important to ensure that the implemented strategy remains relevant and adaptive to change. With a more integrated evaluation, libraries in Kendari City can optimize their role as literacy centers that support the improvement of people's quality of life.

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## **CONCLUSION**

This study concludes that the implementation of library management functions which includes planning, organizing, mobilizing, and supervising has a significant role in increasing people's interest in reading in Kendari City. Although various challenges, such as infrastructure limitations, low literacy awareness, and the dominance of digital media, still exist, strategic measures such as technology-based service innovation, collaboration with the community, and data-driven evaluation have shown positive results. These findings highlight the importance of an adaptive and inclusive approach in library management to face literacy challenges in the modern era. Theoretically, this study strengthens the literature on the role of strategic management in supporting literacy culture. Practically, this study provides guidance for developing more effective strategies in library management, especially in areas with similar characteristics.

These findings have theoretical benefits in enriching the literature on library management, especially in the context of digital literacy and cross-sector collaboration. Practically, the results of this study provide a concrete solution to increase community participation in literacy activities through an approach based on local needs and the use of technology. However, this study has limitations, including the limitation of the research sample focused on one location, so the generalization of results needs to be done carefully. For future research, it is recommended to expand the research area and involve more variables, such as the analysis of people's digital habits and their impact on reading interest. The researcher also recommends the development of a longitudinal study to evaluate the long-term impact of library management strategies on improving public literacy.

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## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

The main recommendation of this study is the need to strengthen library management strategies through increasing digital literacy, developing programs based on local wisdom, and expanding cross-sector collaboration. Libraries need to adopt more advanced technology to

improve the accessibility of reading materials and create programs that are relevant to the needs of the younger generation. In addition, the local government is expected to provide budget support and training for librarians to optimize library service capacity. The researcher recommends that educational institutions and local communities be more actively involved in the planning and implementation of literacy programs to strengthen their impact.

For further research, it is recommended to explore the relationship between digital literacy and reading habits in society in a broader context. Research on the role of social media in building a reading culture can also provide new insights for literacy promotion strategies. In addition, studies that involve comparative analysis between different regions with different levels of literacy will provide a deeper understanding of the factors that affect the success of literacy programs. Thus, efforts to increase people's interest in reading can be designed more strategically and evidence-based.

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