Academic library collaboration to optimize library services

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Abstract

Background of the study: College libraries as centers for quality knowledge management should strive to optimize their services so as to meet the needs of users. However, it is not possible for libraries to meet all the needs of their users due to certain limitations, so collaboration is necessary.

Purpose: This study explains the implementation of Widyatama and Brawijaya University Library collaboration to optimize their services, including organizational structure and collaboration tools, as well as its impacts.

Method: This research uses qualitative descriptive methods with data collection techniques through observation, interviews, and literature studies.

Findings: The collaboration uses the MoA and has formed a special unit. In its implementation, there are still some lackings. In addition, this collaboration has had more impact especially related to service quality, such as ease of information access and sharing.

Conclusion: College library collaboration can improve the quality of education and research and make the institutions that house them more prime through increasing access and quality of services, efficient management of information resources, and empowering academic libraries. This research makes a new contribution in the understanding and implementation of collaboration between college libraries as an effort to optimize library services.

Keywords: library collaborations, college library, library services

Introduction

College libraries not only function as centers of information and knowledge, but also function as technical implementation units that assist universities in implementing the Tri Dharma of Higher Education, by: 1) As a support for educational and teaching activities, college libraries must be able to collect, manage, store, present and share information in accordance with the applicable curriculum with the academic community; 2) As a support for research activities, university libraries must be able to collect, manage, store, present and share information according to the needs of researchers; and 3) As a support for community service activities, university libraries must be able to collect, manage, store, present and share information with the public. Then, university libraries are also responsible for serving their users, especially in public and academic community, find information easily, and precisely. This is in line with the definition of college libraries explained by Basuki (2011:2.17), which states that college libraries are established to help universities achieve their goals and are located within the college premises, its subordinate bodies, and institutions related to the college. The height where the library is housed. In this way, college libraries must be able to collect, manage, preserve and serve their collections so that they can be used optimally by users and the objectives of college library services can be achieved. The College Libraries serve many functions not just as a places to store collections but also as centers for quality knowledge management. They help readers find the resources they need, assist in the research process, and build the information skills needed in academic work. Apart from that, university libraries also play an important role in providing career development programs and services to empower students by utilizing library resources effectively (Prelovskaya, et al., 2022). Considering this, it is necessary to provide optimal services in university libraries so that the information needs of users can be met.

The rapid development of the times has accelerated the rate of information, so that the impact has been felt in the library sector. The fast changing of time has been increased the volume of available information, which affected and changes the nature of libraries. With the amount of information continue to grow exponentially, it is important initiative to evaluate relevant information resources thoroughly. As a result of the need for immediate use of information, the need for information at all levels of society has increased and become more complex, especially in terms of problem solving and decision making. To continue to develop and not be left behind in the 21st century, things like learning, critical thinking, and problem solving skills must be a priority (Hilbert, 2017). Therefore, as a result of the rapid development of this era, libraries must be able to adapt and continue to innovate in order to be able to meet the needs of their users quickly and precisely so that they can provide support for the implementation of the Tri Dharma of Higher Education. However, university libraries will not be able to fully meet all the information needs of their users through their own collections and services. Although university libraries strive to provide extensive collections and services, factors such as limited funds, physical space and time are factors that influenced the library's capacity to provide complete collections. Apart from that, information that continues to develop and information sources that are increasingly available in various forms also mean that libraries cannot stand alone (Wijayanti, Sinulingga, and Yusniah, 2023). In this regard, library cooperation, especially in university libraries, is a significant thing that must be established. By collaborating with libraries, it is possible to combine resources and increase access to wider collections, which can then support the efforts of university libraries in optimizing their defined services.

One of the university libraries that has collaborated with other libraries as an effort to optimize its services by increasing the library's role in meeting the information needs of users and ensuring a better learning experience in the tertiary environment is the Widyatama

University and Brawijaya University Libraries. Through this collaboration, the two academic libraries involved have the main goal of optimizing their services in supporting the Tri Dharma of Higher Education. In this case, cooperation must be able to improve the quality of services between the two libraries, including accessibility to information, services to users, and support for the academic community. Then, cooperation can also optimize library services by sharing wider resources and collections so that they can be used jointly by users of each libraries involved, integrating information systems between university libraries so as to enable users to search for and access information and digital services more conveniently, and increase staff competency through seminar events; hands-on workshops; as well as joint skills trainings. With so many benefits that can be gained from collaboration between university libraries, collaboration between the Widyatama University Library and Brawijaya University is very relevant and timely, especially in keeping up with the rapid development of the libraries. Through collaboration, the two libraries can support each other, overcome existing limitations, and increase efficiency in meeting library information needs. In addition, a better understanding of the resources available through collaboration will help readers explore more sources of information, which will in turn improve the quality of research and learning. In this way, university libraries can better respond to the challenges of the times, so that the Tri Dharma of Higher Education can be realized.

Research and writings related to collaboration between university libraries as an effort to improve the quality and optimize library services have previously been studied by other authors, but research that specifically discusses collaboration between the Widyatama Library and Brawijaya University to optimize library services has not yet been studied before. The previous research Suratmi (2021). This research explains the forms of service collaboration between libraries and the factors that influence them so that the libraries involved can complement each other and meet the information needs of users. Other research conducted by Putri (2019), the collaboration carried out by the Atma Jaya Yogyakarta University Library with various institutions, including Jogja Library for All, APTIK Library Network, Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK), Bank Indonesia, and the Indian Embassy. In addition, components that support collaboration are discussed so that they can be used to improve activities in various resources, provide access to broader collections, and modify library and technical services. Meanwhile, the factors that hinder libraries' efforts to collaborate are also explained in the article, but the content is similar to that explained in Suratmi's (2021) research, such as language factors, finances, library attitudes, lack of synchronization between regulations or systems, and poor understanding, less related to the benefits obtained as a result of implementing cooperation. The similarities with this research lie in the focus discussed, namely the collaboration carried out by university libraries as an effort to improve the quality of library services. The difference is that this research clearly describes the collaboration carried out by university libraries with various institutions, whereas in this article the author will only discuss one collaboration, namely between fellow university libraries.

Departing from the discussion in the two previous studies, this article aims to explain the implementation of university library collaboration at the Widyatama University and Brawijaya University Libraries to optimize their services, including the organizational structure and cooperation tools, shortcomings, and the impacts resulting from their cooperation agreements. In this way, this research can provide an overview of cooperation between university libraries and can also be used as evaluation material for the two libraries involved to develop cooperation in the future. Therefore, this research is very important, especially in the context of the development of university libraries and changes in increasingly complex information demands that continues to develop. This research has an important meaning in providing insight into how university libraries, such as the Widyatama University Library and

Brawijaya University, can continue to meet the information needs of users efficiently and effectively. Apart from that, this research is also important action that can help explain and provide an understanding of how library collaboration can contribute to the implementation of the Tri Dharma of Higher Education, as well as help libraries, especially university libraries, to understand the changing needs of their users and adapt so that they can remain relevant and effective in managing knowledge. The questions in this research include: 1) How is the collaboration between the Widyatama University Library and Brawijaya University be implemented? and 2) What are the impacts resulting from the implementation of collaboration between the Widyatama University Library and Brawijaya University?

Method

Research Design

Research methods have a very important role and function and can be used as a guide in completing and obtaining results from research well. Descriptive research, which is a qualitative approach, was used by the authors in this study to describe or analyze research results, although it did not reach broader conclusions (Sugiyono, 2018: 147). The authors chose to use descriptive research methods to obtain a systematic, factual and accurate visualization regarding the collaboration carried out by the Widyatama University Library and the Brawijaya University Library. Meanwhile, the definition of a qualitative research approach is expressed by Moleong (2016), states that research that is intended to find out the reality that occurs to research subjects holistically, described using terms and language in a specific natural context and utilizing various natural methods. The aim of carrying out a qualitative research approach is to reveal a phenomenon in detail, through detailed data collection methods, so that it can prove that the details of the data being studied are important. Based on this understanding and objectives, it can be concluded that in qualitative research it doesn't look at the large number of respondents or research objects, but rather prioritize the details of the data obtained. Therefore, the more detailed and thorough the data collected, the higher quality the results obtained will be.

Location

The authors took the research settings at the Widyatama University Library, which is in the Pustakaloka Building located at Jalan Cikutra No. 204 A, Bandung. Then, to obtain data for this research, the authors used observations, interviews, and literature study techniques. In making observations, researchers visited the Widyatama University Library directly and conducts observation of situation there, especially in terms of operational services. Furthermore, researchers also conducted personal interviews with informants, by asking questions regarding the implementation of collaborative activities carried out with other libraries, especially the Brawijaya University Library and the impact of this collaboration in terms of optimizing library services.

Data collection

To determine informants in this research, the authors used a purposive sampling technique, which is a technique used to determine samples by considering certain criteria (Sugiyono, 2018: 144). Using this technique, the authors determine the informants using the criteria of heads/librarians/staff who work at the Widyatama University Library; understand properly about the cooperation carried out by the library; and willing to be interviewed. Based on these criteria, the author recruited and obtained one informant, namely Mrs. Cucu Hodijah as head of the Widyatama University Library. By choosing her as an informant, the authors will be able to obtain complete answers and information regarding the problem being studied.

Finally, the researchers also collected data using literature study techniques, which states that studies related to theoretical studies and references related to things that developed in the social situation being studied (Sugiyono, 2018). The literature used is in the form of books and scientific writings such as articles and theses which discussed in the university library collaboration. In obtaining literature relevant to the research topic, the authors conducted a search on the Google Scholar and Mendeley databases by entering the keywords library collaboration, college library collaboration, optimizing services through library collaboration, library collaboration, college library collaboration, and improving library services through collaboration.

Data analysis

After all the data was accumulated, the authors analyze comprehensively the data. As explained by Miles & Huberman (2014), this research carried out data analysis into three processes: 1) Data reduction, namely the analysis process carried out by making a summary containing important things; 2) Presentation of data, namely collecting structured information so as to form a comprehensive and detailed picture of the research; and 3) Drawing conclusions from the data, namely looking for meaning and providing explanations.

By using qualitative descriptive research methods and data collection techniques through observation, interviews and literature studies, it is hoped that researchers can obtain research results in the form of real descriptions related to collaboration between the Widyatama University Library and Brawijaya University as an effort to optimize library services, including the factual application and the positive impact of this collaboration.

Result and Discussion

Collaboration between libraries are actually an initiative where libraries and other institutions with the same needs, interests and goals can join, so that they are able to exceed the expectations made by libraries independently (Wong, 2016). The principle of cooperation between libraries are implemented to provide better services to their users, through providing complete collections, cross-service, collection development, and so on. The library approved plans and cooperation agreements with the head of the library or librarian appointed as a representative after there agreed to work together. In this case, library cooperation can include cooperation at various levels such as international, regional, local, as well as between various types of libraries. Collaboration between the Widyatama University Library and Brawijaya University is an example of the implementation of library cooperation as an effort to optimize library services. With the main aim of increasing access, optimizing resources and improving services, this collaboration reflects the commitment of the two universities involved to support education, research and community service at a higher level.

The Widyatama University Library is a supporting facility for the university, which functions as a center for storing and disseminating scientific information. Together with other facilities at Widyatama University, the existence of the library aims to support the Tri Dharma of Higher Education, such as education, research and community service to information through the services it offers. The collaboration between the Widyatama University Library and the Brawijaya University Library has a strong background in its implementation. One of the bases for this collaboration is the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia No. 14 of 2014 concerning Higher Education Cooperation, which in Article 2 sets out the objectives of higher education cooperation programs to increase effectiveness, efficiency, productivity, creativity, innovation, quality and relevance of implementation. According to the results of interviews with informants, it was stated that based on these regulations, cooperation between the Widyatama University Library and Brawijaya University

started from the university leadership level, with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Chancellor and the Rector. Apart from implementing these regulations, cooperation between university libraries also arises for the interests of both parties. By working together of these libraries, either large or small, it will benefit each other to maximize the use of information resources. In this case, collaboration becomes a channel for sharing collections, experiences and services, so as to provide greater advantages for users. Furthermore, the informant also said that collaboration between the Widyatama University Library and Brawijaya University is also important in the context of accreditation and networking. Through this collaboration, Widyatama University will be able to fulfill the requirements in the quality assurances, especially in terms of providing access to collections (Rahma, Yusuf, and Afdal, 2021), with this broad access it will be able to improve the quality of education and research, which are the key components from accreditation. Then, accreditation can also be supported through increasing the competency and performance of human resources due to library collaboration (Ferdiansyah, 2022). Apart from that, collaboration also allows Widyatama University to establish wider networks with other institutions.

Reporting from the official website of the Widyatama University Library, it was stated that each head of library from both the Widyatama University Library and Brawijaya University signed a cooperation agreement through MoA or Memorandum of Agreement on August 10, 2023 and was held in Malang City. In the MoA, the names and identification of the parties involved are clearly stated (including the names of the delegates, both individuals and legal positions), a description of the objectives of the cooperation, the scope of the cooperation, the duration and validity period of the agreement, as well as the rights and responsibilities from each party in implementing the cooperation. Regarding the contents of the MoA, the informant also said that it included resource development through this collaboration. By using the MoA as tool, it will be easier for the two libraries working together to develop a framework for collaboration, so that they can achieve the goal of improving library and technical services (Putra, Suryadarma, and Maulana, 2021). In addition, the use of these tools also helps in creating collaboration strategies (Martín and Angelozzi, 2010).

Figure 1. Signing of the MoA of Widyatama Library and Brawijaya University
Source: Widyatama University Library Official Website

In the context of library collaboration, the important role of organizational structure in facilitating, supervising and ensuring the smooth implementation of this collaboration is inseparable. In the case of collaboration between the Widyatama University Library and Brawijaya University, the organizational structure is also key in carrying out this collaboration. In this regard, the Widyatama University Library has established a special unit to manage collaboration. This collaboration unit functions as the main coordinator in managing collaboration between libraries. When there are other units that want to collaborate as external parties, such as other libraries or other institutions, they must first submit a draft or cooperation plan to the library cooperation unit. Then, this unit will verify the cooperation plan. The aim is to ensure that the collaboration that will be carried out is in line with the university's goals and policies, and meets the expected quality standards. In this process, verification carried out by the library collaboration unit is an important step to avoid potential problems or conflicts that may arise due to collaboration that is not well coordinated. Apart from that, verification also helps maintain consistency with the guiding principles of cooperation that have been established by universities. By having an organizational structure that clearly regulates library collaboration, collaboration can be carried out more efficiently and effectively, and in accordance with the goals of each party involved. Apart from that, this supports transparency, accountability, and constant monitoring of library cooperation, which supports the implementation of the Tri Dharma of Higher Education and increases the nation's competitiveness. Thus, the organizational structure related to library collaboration becomes a strong foundation to ensure success and maximum positive impact from the implementation of this collaboration.

In practice, the Widyatama University Library cannot reject students from Brawijaya University since they have collaborated for observation purposes or research needs. Then, on the other hand, the Widyatama University Library is also given access rights to the Brawijaya University Library collections. Even though this access may not be in general, if an academic member from Widyatama University needs a collection that may be at Brawijaya University, they can contact directly the librarian to request a copy of digital documents from the collection they need. Apart from that, collaboration with the Brawijaya University Library allows for the exchange of information about libraries between library heads and staff since both are members of the FPPTI or Indonesian Higher Education Library Forum. In this way, an effective communication channel will be created to share experiences, lessons and best practices in library management. However, the results of interviews with informants shows that there are still several shortcomings in the implementation of collaboration between the Widyatama University Library and Brawijaya University Library. These shortcomings include, among others, that there are still no routine evaluation activities to monitor and improve cooperation so that it will be more effective in the future, there are no joint activities such as seminars or other events held by the two libraries, there are no real written practices of human resource development on the MoA for cooperation, and there are no special budget allocated for cooperation. Regarding the budget, there is only a budget provision for needs such as transportation and consumption for librarians or library staff. For example, if the head of one of the libraries will visit a partnered library, the transportation costs for the departure and return will be covered. Then, if one of the libraries at any time hosts a joint event, there will be a budget spent especially for the expenses made by the event participants. Unfortunately, this joint activity has never been carried out until this time.

Considering that there are still several shortcomings, in the future the Widyatama University Library can start holding regular evaluations related to collaboration, where other parties involved also take part in these activities. Evaluation is an important part to carry out in the practice of library collaboration. In evaluation, values and needs in future collaboration can

be identified, as well as knowing the challenges that need to be overcome to achieve successful collaboration (Priatmana, et al., 2022). In this case, evaluation can be carried out on performance, achievement of goals, and obstacles that arise so that later concrete steps can be taken to increase the effectiveness of existing cooperation. Then, so that the implementation of collaboration can provide better knowledge and experience and can develop its human resources, this library can consider starting to hold joint activities such as seminars, workshops, research projects, and among others, so that the implementation of the resource development practices stated in the MoA can be well implemented. By strengthening human resources, libraries can provide better services to users. This is in line with Chisita (2018) statement that strengthening human resources through collaboration can enable libraries to adapt to a changing environment and improve services to be more innovative and responsive. However, organizing these activities certainly cannot be separated from the need for a budget. Therefore, libraries can allocate a special budget for collaboration which will also be used for projects or developing technological infrastructure that can support the implementation of collaboration. Having a dedicated budget allocation for implementing library collaboration is important, it allows libraries to pool? resources and even negotiate with partners, thereby ensuring access to a wider variety of materials for their users (Tripathi and Lal, 2016). Through the implementation of these steps, the Widyatama University and Brawijaya University Libraries will be able to overcome their shortcomings in cooperation and can help both of them to achieve common goals in optimizing library services, maximizing access to information resources for users, and supporting the implementation of the Tri Dharma of Higher Education.

Meanwhile, the implementation of library collaboration between the Widyatama University Library and Brawijaya University Library also has a positive impact in various aspects, especially related to optimizing services. Then, this positive impact also supports and enriches the role of libraries. The first positive impact is providing easy access to information from other libraries. Through the implementation of cooperation, access to resources that may not be available in one library can be provided efficiently since users from both libraries can easily obtain information collections from partnered libraries. This is certainly important for optimizing services, since it allows libraries to provide a wider range of resources to their users, including books and electronic journals that can meet library needs in the digital era (Lubis, et al., 2023). Second, this library collaboration can also enable wider information sharing activities between workers from the libraries involved. In this case, this information can be in the form of information about seminars, training, and so on which of course can be useful for affiliated libraries in improving the quality of their services. With collaboration that allows sharing of knowledge and expertise, it can help libraries overcome their respective limitations (Yusniah, 2023). Third, cooperation also allows the libraries involved to complement each other in meeting the information needs of their users. For example, if one library has a weakness in a particular subject filed of collection, they can rely on partnered libraries to meet those needs. In the context of the Tri Dharma of Higher Education, library collaboration is able to help academics in better education, research, and community service through wider access. Lastly, collaboration also provides assistance in accessing collections that are difficult to find since they are not available or no longer published. With these many positive impacts, collaboration between libraries, especially the Widyatama University Library and Brawijaya University Library, can play a role in achieving their goals of educating the nation and implementing the Tri Dharma of Higher Education more effectively. Through this collaboration, both can optimize their library services and better answer the challenges of 21st century. This impact reflects the importance of cooperation between higher education institutions to improve the quality and relevance of education, especially in Indonesia. In essence, the implementation of the collaboration between the Widyatama University Library and Brawijaya University Library

has been quite good despite several shortcomings, since it has provided more positive impacts for both parties.

Conclusion

The college libraries are important component in supporting the Tri Dharma of Higher Education which needs to optimize their services so that they can better meet the information needs. However, certain limitations make it difficult for university libraries to achieve this. In this case, cooperation is the right step to overcome limitations and enable university libraries to increase library access to broader and more diverse information resources. This research shows that cooperation can improve the quality of education and research and make the institutions that support them through increasing access and quality of services, efficient management of information resources, and empowering libraries. Collaboration between libraries has received attention in previous research, but research that specifically discusses collaboration between the Widyatama University Library and Brawijaya University Library has never been carried out before. Therefore, this research provides a new contribution to the understanding and implementation of collaboration between university libraries as an effort to optimize library services, since previously there was no research that specifically discussed collaboration between the Widyatama University Library and Brawijaya University Library.

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Authors' Contributions

All authors have contributed to the final manuscript. The contribution of all authors: Zarra Zakiyyah Izzaturrahmah Gunadi and Prijana: conceptualization, methodology, formal analysis, writing original draft preparation, writing review and editing. James Nicolo Sias: writing review and editing. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Conflict of Interest

All authors have no conflict of interest related to this study.

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