The importance of transformative libraries and librarians' role

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Abstract

Libraries face new challenges amidst social change, digital developments, and increasing disparities in access to information. In this context, there is an urgent need to reposition the role of libraries—not merely as information centers but as agents of empowerment and social transformation. This article aims to examine the significance of implementing the concept of transformative libraries and to formulate the strategic role of librarians in supporting this process. This study employed a qualitative approach using a case study design involving field observations, the CIPP (Context, Input, Process, Product) evaluation model, and a systematic literature review to enrich the analysis. The findings indicated that libraries had great potential to foster local knowledge production, strengthen community literacy movements, and support the democratization of information access. Community participation in managing library services has emerged as a key element in revitalizing libraries as community-based institutions. Challenges such as the digital divide, limited information literacy, and inadequate technological infrastructure emphasized the urgency of redefining the role of libraries. Conversely, librarians were also expected to transform into transformative intellectuals who functioned as facilitators of learning and drivers of social change. This study also developed a model of librarian information behavior that could serve as a reference for professional development in Indonesia. These findings highlight the vital role of transformative libraries as democratic spaces that encourage active community engagement in the lifelong learning process.

Keywords: Transformative library; librarian role; community-based service

Urgensi perpustakaan transformatif dan peran pustakawan

Abstrak

Perpustakaan menghadapi tantangan baru seiring dengan adanya perubahan sosial, perkembangan teknologi digital, dan meningkatnya kesenjangan dalam akses informasi. Dalam situasi ini, muncul kebutuhan mendesak untuk mereposisi fungsi perpustakaan—dari sekadar pusat informasi menjadi agen pemberdayaan dan transformasi sosial. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji pentingnya penerapan konsep perpustakaan transformatif serta merumuskan peran strategis pustakawan dalam mendukung proses tersebut. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus, yang melibatkan observasi lapangan, pendekatan evaluasi CIPP (Context, Input, Process, Product), serta tinjauan literatur sistematis untuk memperkaya analisis. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa perpustakaan memiliki potensi besar dalam mendorong produksi pengetahuan lokal, memperkuat gerakan literasi masyarakat, serta mendukung demokratisasi akses informasi. Partisipasi masyarakat dalam pengelolaan layanan menjadi elemen penting dalam menghidupkan kembali perpustakaan sebagai institusi berbasis komunitas. Tantangan seperti ketimpangan digital, keterbatasan literasi informasi, dan kurangnya infrastruktur teknologi informasi semakin menegaskan urgensi pembaruan peran perpustakaan. Di sisi lain, pustakawan juga perlu bertransformasi menjadi intelektual transformatif yang mampu berperan sebagai fasilitator pembelajaran dan penggerak perubahan sosial. Penelitian ini turut menghasilkan model perilaku informasi pustakawan yang dapat digunakan sebagai referensi dalam pengembangan profesi di Indonesia. Temuan ini menekankan bahwa perpustakaan yang transformatif berperan penting sebagai ruang demokratis yang mendorong keterlibatan aktif masyarakat dalam proses belajar sepanjang hayat.

Kata Kunci: perpustakaan transformatif; peran pustakawan; pelayanan berbasis komunitas

INTRODUCTION

Library Science is a field of science that is currently experiencing rapid development. Various factors cause this situation; one of the most influential is the interaction with information and communication technology. The rapid development of information technology has caused various aspects of librarianship to change, starting from library information needs, library information behavior, library management, and library services. The development of information technology has affected the environment and communities served by libraries. Various aspects of society are also affected, such as culture, both community culture and institutional culture, language, lifestyle and various other social aspects (Accart, 2022). Such conditions have had quite an impact on developing countries, especially after the Covid-19 pandemic.

The current condition of libraries in Indonesia, as a developing country, continues to face structural and conceptual challenges. Most public and school libraries remain dominated by a positivist approach—emphasizing routines, standard procedures, and performance-based targets. Literacy programs are often applied rigidly, leaving little room for adaptation or contextual innovation. These institutionalized practices are deeply embedded, making them resistant to change and poorly aligned with the demands of the ever-evolving contemporary information environment.

It seems that the positivist model still dominates public libraries and school libraries, and many consider libraries as repositories of information and librarians as stewards of these resources. However, although acting as a repository has been the primary role for libraries since their inception, many factors, including postmodern conceptions of the nature of knowledge in the information age, the democratization of knowledge production and dissemination, the emphasis on community-based lifelong learning, and the movement toward collaborative and transformative ideas in teaching and learning have required libraries to adapt (Wiranda et al., 2023). Accart (2022) explains that integration is a library transformation strategy to reach more users who use the library.

In this context, adaptation is not only desirable but also a critical necessity. While many public and school libraries in Indonesia still operate under a positivist framework—viewing libraries as static repositories and librarians as custodians—the scale of the library infrastructure in Indonesia presents both challenges and opportunities. As shown in Table 1, Indonesia ranks second in the world in terms of the total number of libraries, with over 164,000 library units, surpassed only by India. Further data in Table 2 reveals that the majority of these are school libraries (68.98%), followed by public libraries (25.79%), indicating that these institutions are closest to the community and the youth population. However, these impressive figures have not been matched by transformative shifts in the library function.

Table 1. Countries with the Largest Number of Libraries in the World

Country	Total Library
India	323.605
Indonesia	164.510
Rusia	113.440
China	105.831

Source: Nasional, 2019

Table 2. Quantity of Library in Indonesia

Library Category	Quantity
Public Library	42.460 (25,79%)
Collage Library	6.552 (3,98%)
Special Library	2.057 (1,25%)
School Library	113.541 (68,98%)
Total	**164.610**

Source: Nasional, 2019

Wiranda, Agustini, and Anwar (2023) highlighted that the Indonesian library sector must move beyond its traditional custodial role, given the ongoing democratization of knowledge and the increasing need for participatory, community-based, and lifelong learning models. The integration strategy proposed by Accart (2022) is particularly relevant, calling for libraries to embed themselves into the community's everyday learning practices, particularly through digital inclusion and collaborative programs. Without such adaptation, existing infrastructure risks becoming irrelevant in the face of an increasingly complex information landscape and diverse user needs. Thus, the focus must shift from the quantity of libraries to their qualitative transformation as inclusive, dynamic, and socially responsive knowledge spaces.

However, of course, this is not necessarily accompanied by efforts to shift from the positivist model that the author mentioned previously. The shift occurs slowly and is partly initiated by the community. Movements carried out by literacy communities in society are able to intervene in the community learning process at the micro or local level so that the changes that occur are still on a small scale. They expand their impact by networking with other communities and are supported by universities, the central government through national institutions and corporate social responsibility (CSR).

Therefore, this study seeks to examine a different perspective on libraries than the more conventional one, namely the perspective that emphasizes community-based and transformative libraries. Transformative libraries refer to libraries that go beyond information storage to actively engage communities through critical pedagogy, inclusion, and co-creation of knowledge (Achebe et al., 2023; Iyer & Ramachandran, 2020; Rast & Ghorashi, 2024; Nafisah, 2022).

These organizations promote opportunities for empowerment and community transformation in addition to possibilities for research and consultation. They also identify issues within the framework of libraries and education.

Critical library pedagogy recognizes that learning experiences and communities

are essential to the educational process (Kammer & Moreland, 2020). That is, the transformative role of libraries and librarians is to facilitate the production of knowledge rather than simply transmit it (Carter & Santiago, 2023; Cox, 2023; Adiprabowo et al., 2019).

The execution is through a series of pedagogical methods, concepts, and theories that emerge naturally in the process of confronting the lived experiences of service users or readers based on democratic relationships. In this context, libraries are not just places to seek information but become active spaces for critical dialogue, reflection, and collective learning. For example, libraries that implement community-based literacy groups, storytelling forums, or participatory research workshops embody this transformative role.

These initiatives allow users—particularly those from marginalized communities—to not only access knowledge but also shape and contribute to its creation. By positioning librarians as co-learners and facilitators rather than gatekeepers, critical library pedagogy fosters inclusive and emancipatory practices that align with broader goals of social justice and lifelong learning.

The emphasis on community empowerment and the movement toward collaborative and transformative ideas in learning have encouraged libraries to move beyond their previous roles. In this way, such pedagogies give voice to the needs and hopes of underrepresented minority groups and local communities. Libraries have the potential to develop into transformative spaces for empowering communities through the production of

local knowledge that provides a vision and (literate) movement towards a more democratic future.

This article emerges from a concern that despite the significant number of libraries in Indonesia globally, these institutions have yet to undergo a meaningful transformation in their social functions. Many libraries continue to operate under procedural and hierarchical service models that are unresponsive to community needs and digital dynamics. In contrast, contemporary challenges—such as technological inequality, low levels of information literacy, and limited public engagement—demand that libraries adopt more inclusive and transformative roles.

In response to this context, the study seeks to answer two central research questions: (1) How can libraries in Indonesia shift from a procedural and top-down service model to a transformative framework that promotes community participation, digital inclusion, and lifelong learning? And (2) What strategic roles should librarians play in initiating and sustaining this transformation, particularly in structurally constrained and technologically unequal environments?

The novelty of this research lies in the integration of critical and community-based approaches to analyze transformative libraries in Indonesia, alongside the development of a librarian information behavior model that positions librarians as agents of social change. By combining empirical data and a systematic literature review, this study not only maps existing challenges but also offers a context-sensitive and sustainable approach to managing knowledge and fostering community empowerment.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study aimed to explain the urgency of transformative libraries and the role of librarians in them. To achieve this goal, the researcher used a qualitative approach because it could provide a deeper understanding of the research topic. While, the type of research used was a case study. Data mining was performed using several data collection techniques, including continuous observation, which was carried out in integration with the implementation of the Ruang Belajar Aqil (RBA) activity program in the period 2017 to 2022.

RBA is a community-based non-profit organization based in Malang, East Java, established in 2010 and officially registered as a legal entity in 2020. RBA focuses on empowering youth, communities, and the broader community through a wide range of educational and social programs. These programs include open reading spaces, digital literacy initiatives, language and skills development classes (Kelasuka), thematic workshops, and certified internship opportunities, all designed to foster meaningful and constructive learning experiences. In addition, RBA actively collaborates with schools, community reading centers, universities, and various strategic partners and has expanded its reach through global volunteer programs and a "back-to-back" model aimed at strengthening interregional learning networks.

The second method was the Context, Input, Process, and Product (CIPP) evaluation model in Ruang Belajar Aqil in the period 2017-2022. The implementation of programs and activities in RBA took place dynamically. The evaluation process was a crucial point for determining how to organize subsequent programs and activities. The program approach often varied as it was tailored to the needs and social characteristics of program participants. This situation was a crucial aspect in describing how the librarian ran this transformative library. During this period, Ruang Belajar Aqil carried out various Focused Group Discussions (FGD) and Leaderless Group Discussions (LGD) to explore the views of academics in the library and information science disciplines (representatives from Brawijaya University, the State Islamic University of Malang, and State University Malang) and the views of literacy activists in Malang, both from community entities, school libraries, university libraries and public libraries as practitioners in the field of library and information science.

Participants of the FGD and LGD organized by Ruang Belajar Aqil were selected based on representative criteria that reflected diverse theoretical and practical perspectives in the field of library and information science. These criteria included the involvement of academics from higher education institutions with relevant study programs—such as the Brawijya University, Maulana Malik Ibrahim State Islamic University of Malang, and the State University of Malang—who had track records of research and teaching in information literacy. In addition, participants comprised literacy practitioners and library professionals from various types of institutions—school libraries, academic libraries, public libraries, and community-based organizations—with direct experience in community-oriented information services.

The objective of formal and non-formal institutions was to capture

contextual and holistic insights relevant to literacy development in the Malang region. The selection process also considered the participants' active role in managing literacy empowerment initiatives and their engagement in local literacy networks, ensuring that the discussions reflected current needs, challenges, and the transformative potential of contemporary literacy practices. The results of multiple group discussions were followed up in the implementation of programs and activities.

The third method used a brief systematic literature review, which, of course, correlated with related relevant topics and issues. The researcher used this method to carry out simple comparisons between existing practices and developing theories and concepts. This comparison resulted in the justification of existing practices and the novelty of approaches in library transformation because there was no explanation of existing theories and concepts.

The researcher attempted to obtain data validity using data triangulation techniques. There were two triangulation techniques: method triangulation and data source triangulation, both conceptually and empirically. However, this study has limitations because this research does not conduct normative elaboration in the context of policies or regulations related to libraries.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

First, Community's Position in Transformative Libraries. The involvement of community groups and volunteers in library services is not new and has become a feature of most library services. There is a trend to involve the community in the provision of library services more significantly. Their involvement is to support and even manage the library.

Implementing socially inclusive strategies requires rethinking the goals and practices of the organization, and the communities it seeks to reach. Consequently, the role of the library as a potentially inclusive learning place of learning is to provide information, challenge stereotypes and discrimination, promote tolerance, and contribute to the creation of inclusive communities (Prihatin et al., 2024). Therefore, a community-based service model is needed.

The availability and transparency of knowledge-generating conversations present a problem in leveraging information and communication technologies. One of the major impacts of social exclusion, inequality, and marginalization is the unequal allocation of power and knowledge. It also has a significant impact on the experiences, trust and democratic competence of disadvantaged groups (Mukherji, 2018). Libraries must encourage inclusion and engagement in information infrastructure and knowledge distribution, as public institutions are frequently the target of this lack of trust.

Unequal access to information and technology in libraries and other public institutions can result in reduced participatory opportunities for civic engagement (Kine & Davidson, 2021). Libraries can play a significant role in addressing this digital divide by promoting the inclusion and participation of disadvantaged groups in democratic systems. Initially, the digital divide was considered a problem of access to relevant ICT infrastructure and was exacerbated by the relatively high cost of access, especially

in developing countries. Efforts to significantly reduce the digital divide have not yet yielded many results (Ulum, 2018a).

Libraries serve as convening spaces where diverse groups can gather, interact, and collaborate. By providing access to information, digital resources, and inclusive services, libraries play a vital role in bridging knowledge gaps and fostering a sense of belonging among community members (Prihatin et al., 2024b). This shift reflects a broader recognition of libraries as essential institutions for societal growth and development.

Beyond their informational role, libraries actively contribute to community development through various programs and initiatives. Prihatin et al. (2024b) describe that libraries organize workshops, training sessions, and cultural events that empower individuals with new skills and knowledge. These activities not only support lifelong learning but also create opportunities for marginalized groups to participate in social and economic advancements. By offering resources tailored to local needs, libraries become catalysts for social change and economic resilience.

Libraries play a crucial role in preserving and promoting local cultures while adapting to contemporary societal demands. Many institutions integrate cultural heritage programs, language preservation efforts, and arts events that celebrate local traditions.

At the same time, they provide entrepreneurial support, digital literacy training, and networking opportunities that contribute to economic growth. By balancing tradition and innovation, libraries ensure they remain relevant, inclusive, and impactful in the ever-evolving landscape of community development (Prihatin et al., 2024b; Schlak, 2020).

The correlation between engagement in transformative libraries and activism in the broader public domain might hold greater significance for marginalized groups, as it can serve as a catalyst for their participation and result in modifications to institutional frameworks that impede their proactive engagement in the public domain. Consequently, linking alternative library spaces to public action becomes a crucial strategy for becoming relevant and a crucial first step in increasing the number of actors and voices participating in democratic decision-making. Transformative libraries thus play a significant role in democratic systems. Librarians transform libraries into locations that can facilitate the participation of marginalized groups in democratic processes (Ashraf, 2017; D. Wilson, 2020).

Transformative libraries, as the center of the democratic framework, become actors that stimulate information activities carried out by other actors. Other actors include communities/public entities, the government sector, and the business sector. The following is an illustration of a transformative library in stimulating the information activities of actors:
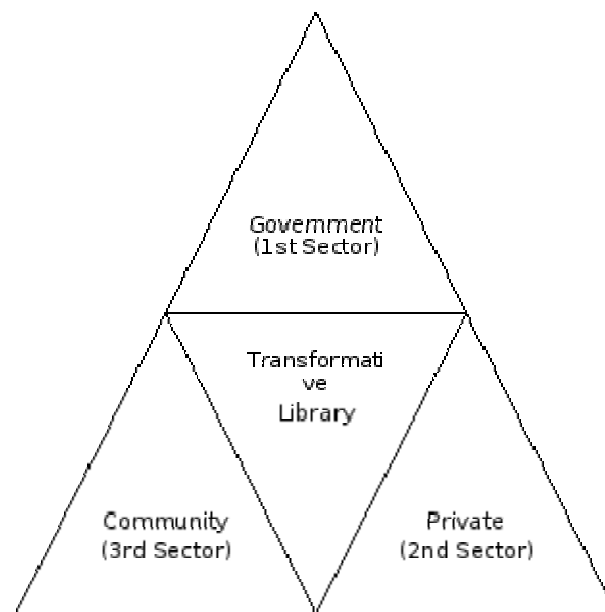
Figure 2. Transformative Libraries Model
Source: Authors Document, 2024

Transformative libraries stimulate the first sector through collaboration with a bureaucratic approach, as is the nature of the first sector. Collaboration with the second sector prioritizes a profit-oriented approach, which is a natural characteristic of the private sector. Meanwhile, collaboration with the third sector prioritizes a value-oriented approach. The main focus in transformative library collaboration is the community, so the third sector in transformative libraries becomes the key actor. Magar (2024) highlights how Community Library and Resource Centers (CLRCs) evolve through direct collaboration with local communities, third-sector organizations, and local governments. CLRCs function as transformative instruments in community-based socio-economic development by integrating education, entrepreneurship, literacy, and social services—demonstrating that civil society actors play a central role in the successful transformation of libraries.

The first and second sectors are not the main actors because both consider sustainability. Political conditions, budget, human resources and vision are obstacles for the first sector in pursuing program sustainability (Odularo, 2024). In several collaborative activities with the first sector, program sustainability is the main evaluation because the programs implemented do not continue in subsequent periods. Meanwhile, in the private sector, profit considerations are the basic consideration in pursuing program sustainability (Meyers, 2017).

The sustainability of the program is easier to achieve in the community because (a) participation is based on volunteerism, (b) motivated by values, and (c) independent of the ruling structure (Anindyka, 2020). They move because of their awareness, not because of coercion, sanctions, awards or rewards as in the first and second sectors.

The community sector emerged due to the needs of the community that the

first and second sectors could not meet. This situation is the basis for the RBA as one of the Third Sector actors in implementing its programs. In general, two related situations cause these needs not to be met. First, the public sector is not effective and efficient in providing services through its agencies (Chapman, 2020). Second, the limited resources of other sectors, especially the public sector, cause them to have to collaborate with the third sector (Anindyka, 2020). This situation then makes the third sector a sector that needs to be considered in carrying out its role in meeting the community's needs. Therefore, transformative libraries make the community sector the key actor.

In various programs, the community sector often receives support from universities. This support includes program collaboration in the context of learning and community service. The RBA has done this with several universities in Malang City, including Brawijaya University, State University of Malang, Muhammadiyah University of Malang, Merdeka University of Malang, and the Health Polytechnic of the Ministry of Health in Malang. Collaboration with these universities is still ongoing and shows its sustainability.

Second, Sustainable Community-Based Services. Public services must evolve rapidly to sustain public trust and relevance (Ulum, 2018), and libraries are no exception. Advances in science and technology have transformed the traditional roles of libraries, demanding a broader vision beyond collections. In the realm of library and information science, research must engage with philosophical underpinnings to enhance decision-making and academic advancement. Shah (2020) argues that while positivism aids empirical studies, it must be complemented with phenomenology to fully capture the complexity of knowledge and address its inherent limitations.

Libraries today are increasingly challenged to redefine their mission amidst the information technology revolution in teaching, learning, and research. Information systems have not only expanded storage and access capabilities but have significantly transformed the organization, function, and management of libraries. In this context, the social value of libraries becomes even more critical. Conley et al. (2019) emphasize that libraries maintain social balance and uphold the right to know— essential pillars of a democratic society. Libraries should, therefore, use technology to reinforce, not replace, these core values (Paley et al., 2015).

As demonstrated in countries such as Nigeria, libraries are embracing social innovation to promote inclusivity despite infrastructural disparities (Ajani, et al., 2024). Through creative approaches, libraries offer marginalized communities access to essential resources for marginalized communities, bridge socio-economic gaps and foster empowerment. However, Khadijah (2018) emphasizes that libraries must go beyond reading spaces and transform into dynamic environments supported by technology and community needs. Despite the promise of digital resources, research shows that those with limited access are often the least able to benefit from them—highlighting the persistence of digital inequality.

In response, community-based service models have emerged, connecting librarians with community members to identify and address local needs. This participatory approach fosters inclusion,

especially for socially marginalized groups. It allows librarians to engage individuals where they feel most comfortable—often outside the library walls—and build trust through real, reciprocal relationships. Librarians thus shift from custodians to facilitators, entering the community respectfully and listening as equals.

According to Wiranda et al. (2023), when community partnerships are sustainable, residents contribute ideas for library services. Mahargono (2018) reinforces that librarians must continuously communicate with communities to contextualize needs and adapt services accordingly. These efforts highlight the uniqueness of each region, where service design must remain responsive to shifting priorities.

The collaborative process enables communities to articulate their needs and participate in program planning. Community members and librarians co-develop initiatives, blending local insights with institutional support. Programs are dynamic—adapted through feedback to ensure relevance and inclusivity. This model not only fosters shared ownership of services but also enhances individual capacity, skills, and long-term sustainability.

Evaluation plays a central role in this cycle. Tania (2023) notes that participatory evaluation allows communities to express what works and what does not while also discussing their experiences. Evaluation is not a final step but occurs throughout the service process. Continuous reflection helps maintain alignment between user-defined needs and service delivery, empowering beneficiaries to shape outcomes directly.

Ruang Belajar Aqil (RBA) developed this approach into the Collaborative and Participatory Empowerment (CoPE) Framework. As explained by Ariwiguna (2020), CoPE promotes community participation and positions collaborators as equal partners working to resolve root problems. This is a shift from fragmented, short-term programs to an integrated sustainable development model.

CoPE emerged as a response to the ineffectiveness of past community programs, which were often unsustainable and failed to produce lasting impact. The framework emphasizes three interrelated pillars: collaboration, participation, and empowerment. The collaborative dimension focuses on mutual benefit—what each party gains from the process. The participatory aspect ensures that all stakeholders contribute meaningfully. Empowerment defines the program's thematic direction—whether in education, economics, health, or institutional capacity.

These four focus areas—education, economic empowerment, health, and institutional strengthening—are interdependent. If any one element is missing, community resilience becomes difficult to sustain. For example, even with adequate education and income, poor health can prevent individuals from thriving. Likewise, education and health are not enough if local institutions remain weak. CoPE recognizes this interconnection and positions institutional strengthening as vital to ensuring long-term community sustainability.

RBA's implementation of CoPE has yielded measurable results. There has been an increase in the quantity and quality of community activities, broader stakeholder

involvement, and cross-sectoral collaboration—including actors from the public sector (first sector), private sector (second sector), and civil society (third sector). This model not only ensures the program's sustainability but also deepens community ownership and adaptability.

More broadly, libraries are increasingly engaging in inter-institutional collaboration to enhance service delivery and align with evolving user needs. Collaborative initiatives enable libraries to share resources, pool expertise, and develop digital platforms that increase accessibility across geographic and institutional boundaries (Singh, 2018). These efforts contribute to the democratization of information and reduce access disparities.

A prominent example is the formation of library consortia, which enables institutions to negotiate better digital licensing agreements, expand interlibrary loan networks, and develop open-access repositories. These consortia not only reduce individual costs but also enrich the user experience by offering diverse and comprehensive collections that would otherwise be unattainable for a single library. They exemplify how systemic collaboration can strengthen the academic ecosystem and the broader role of libraries as public knowledge institutions.

Third, Librarians' Role in Transformative Libraries. Lankes et al. (2015) stated that the roots of librarianship are not in buildings and collections but in knowledge, society, and the improvement or enhancement of human conditions (educational, social, economic and cultural). Changes in people's information behavior are caused by the development of information and communication technology so that librarianship is not limited to a set of tasks and functions because, in the long term, it can cause stagnation and be unable to adapt to the library community's information behavior. The role of librarians, in this case, is becoming increasingly essential in welcoming the new era of librarianship.

Librarians are professionals who are involved in the world of books in everyday life and are required to actively read for the sake of their profession, knowledge and personality development. Along with the development of information technology and changes in the information behavior of the user community, librarians have challenges that focus not only on books or collections but also on developing new models for providing information and knowledge.

Librarians in the modern era are required to not only process collections in the back office. Modern-era librarians are required to be in the front office to increase interaction with library users regarding information and knowledge managed by the library. Such a working concept has existed since the founding of the Library of Alexandria Library. This library is not a library with a large building, but it looks large because the building design optimizes the pillars as collection shelves in order to maximize interaction within it.

The rapid development of science, information and communication technology and changes in public expectations of libraries are some of the challenges in understanding society's needs (Rubin, 2016). Therefore, the community as users largely determine the role of libraries in society. So, it is natural that libraries experience changes in meaning because they follow the changes in the society that uses them.

The community and the library become one because the spirit of the library grows, recedes, or flows with the community that uses it. Therefore, users become one of the main entities in the library in addition to collections and services.

The interaction between librarians and users is one of the noble qualities possessed by librarians. This nobility does not lie in the collection, organizational structure or history but in the actions taken. This characteristic emerged as an output of the mission of modern-era librarians who preserve knowledge in society and improve the quality of life of society through the use of information and knowledge. Through this interaction, librarians can inspire others to read, assist librarians in finding work and even create jobs, help learning, and be directly involved in improving people's lives.

Librarians think about the content of their work and the future of libraries. That is librarian ethics. It is related to how to behave towards library users and this dimension places librarians at the center.

The role of librarians varies from custodian of resources to provider of a wide range of activities ranging from collection development, knowledge organization, information services, preservation and conservation, and management. Librarians traditionally perform these functions using printed devices ranging from collection development devices (e.g., publisher catalogues, printed books, Ulrich, bibliographies); cataloging devices (e.g., classification schemes, such as the Library of Congress Classification [LCC] and the Dewey Decimal Classification [DDC]); information services (e.g., bulletins, bulletin boards); preservation and conservation; etc. Modern technology erodes the traditional ways of performing these functions (Ajani, et al., 2024). However, the availability (staff) of librarians in Indonesia is still inadequate. This can be seen from the data visualization in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Number of Library Personnel in Indonesia
Source: (Nasional, 2019)

Even though librarianship is a profession that has proven its adaptability, the role of librarians remains dynamic and ever-evolving. While continuing their traditional roles as curators and providers of access to information, librarians are now also actively facilitating learning and research processes. Larger institutions may have specialist librarians who guide this work, such as scholarly communication librarians, subject specialists, or librarians who focus on research services.

Libraries and librarians face at least two challenges. First, librarians must be able to align the various collections in the library with the development of information technology. Second, librarians must also be able to provide library services for the new generation who are increasingly familiar with the use of information technology, which demands fast-paced services and is more active (Hidayat, 2016).

Technological advances require librarians to be able to carry out lifelong learning in order to be able to adapt to existing dynamics. So far, librarians have been able to prove themselves as a growing profession. Librarians are still able to survive the changes in libraries (Ganggi, 2019).

In general, librarians are still considered expert consultants who have a specific set of instruments and competencies with which they can provide certain types of services to library visitors/readers. In fact, librarians can encourage users to critically reflect on the information provided, not only as individual learners but also as members of a community who are aware and literate in discourse.

The community-based service model provides libraries with a sustainable approach to working with communities, including those who are underserved. This approach can improve the relevance and quality of library services. In this way, libraries and/or librarians will become more inclusive, and communities will become increasingly literate.

The primary role and responsibility of librarians in transformative libraries touch the core of librarianship. Librarians are uniquely qualified and positioned to promote intellectual freedom. This is the ideal librarian to which we must strive. Information professionalism involves more than simply offering services; it also involves motivating people to gain the essential literacy skills needed to make better life decisions.

Several information literacy programs acknowledge the significance of the cultural, social, political, and religious diversity found in society. Students recognize the importance and constraints of information literacy skills as they become aware of the politics and evidence of information and learn to evaluate it critically by addressing questions of ideology, culture, knowledge, and power. The relationships between librarians, libraries, users, and information and communication technology are shown in Figure 4.
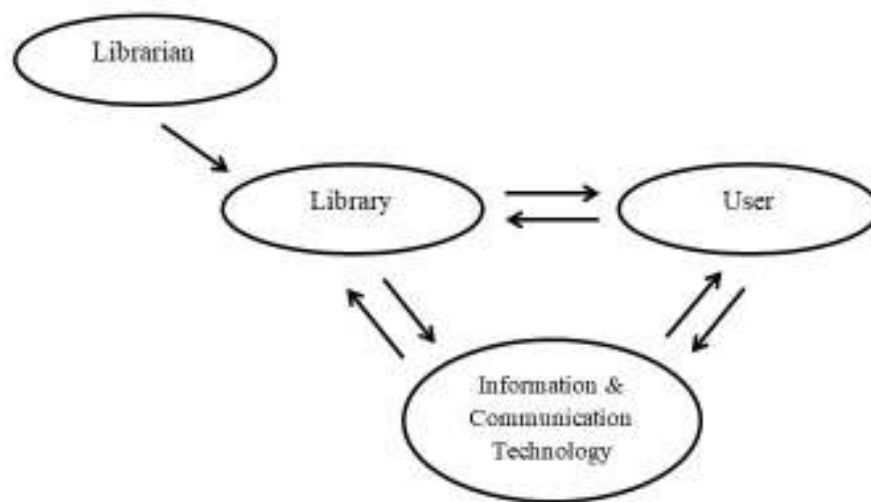
Figure 4. Libraries in the Digital Era
Source: Authors Document, 2024

Librarians in transformative libraries have three main roles, namely as initiator, catalyst and supervisor. The initiator is the party who initiates something. Librarians act as initiators in initiating literacy programs in the community through libraries. Librarians master the concepts of science, technology, society and culture in the form of concepts according to the field studied, then manifest them in the form of programs and activities. Librarians combine conceptual mastery with mastery of phenomena and issues that exist in society.

These phenomena and issues cover local, regional and national scales. Regional and national phenomena and issues are validated through direct observation of the community as readers so that librarians can confirm their relevance. Thus, the initiated program becomes more solid because it is relevant to the community's needs. As an initiator, research is a basic skill for librarians. The research conducted is applied research whose results are in the form of products for the program or the program itself. Therefore, librarians also indirectly carry out scientific, social and cultural development.

A catalyst is someone or something that causes change and gives rise to new events or accelerates an event. Librarians act as catalysts in transformative libraries because they can make a difference in the communities they serve. These changes are made by creating and supporting a learning culture in the community.

Librarians create a learning culture by first exploring the community needs through various approaches, such as using the rural development credo and, after that, designing programs that are relevant to the needs and abilities of the community. The efforts made to instill a learning culture consist of three phases, namely the awareness phase, the learning phase and the empowerment phase. Awareness is the initial phase because the community needs to be aware of their needs first. If awareness already exists, the community can carry out learning, and it can achieve the learning objectives. The empowerment phase is the final phase because the community cannot achieve empowerment if the community does not

have the information and knowledge obtained through the learning process.

Once the community has a good learning culture, librarians support the implementation of this culture so that it remains a constructive culture in the community. Librarians perform this by supporting community learning received through formal education units, such as learning in primary schools for children, secondary schools for teenagers, and universities for young people. Apart from that, librarians also support informal learning in the community, especially in families. Through their role as catalysts, librarians support the implementation of school, family and community collaboration schemes in education.

The last role of the librarian is as a supervisor. The role of the supervisor is to stimulate the sustainability of the programs that have been implemented. The targeted impact is that the community is able to become an information-aware society with indicators of being able to search for information according to needs, being able to utilize the information, and being able to produce knowledge from the information utilized. Therefore, as supervisors, librarians in transformative libraries have good supervision management, starting from planning, implementation, supervision and evaluation.

In planning activities, librarians plan program implementation according to community needs and also involve community entities in the activity. Librarians need to supervise community entities so that they have an annual plan that is followed up with a monthly plan. After being able to make a plan, librarians assist in implementing the plan through literacy programs and activities for the community. In the implementation process, librarians also supervise by checking the suitability of the plan to the situation that occurs during implementation. Librarians can stimulate community entities to use learning plans and curriculum instruments that contain information about community needs, as well as learning targets, to review implementation.

Meanwhile, in the evaluation process, librarians assist community entities as implementers to also conduct periodic evaluations through regular meetings. In addition, we also carry out evaluations at the end of each year to see the achievements of the annual plan. The evaluation results are also used to strengthen the program's sustainability.

Library research and information literacy may strengthen the learning community (Ucik, 2023). They can critically evaluate the electronic technologies that influence popular culture, television, and film. The abundance of information literacy in libraries fosters the notion of critical reflection by teaching patrons how to create new media as a critical voice in addition to the skills of identifying biased materials.

CONCLUSION

Transformative libraries are built on a framework of community collaboration and participation, positioning local entities not only as agents but also as catalysts for broader library transformation. Rather than maintaining a positivist view of libraries as neutral spaces, libraries must be reimagined as sites of social engagement where education is shaped through dynamic dialogues around values and knowledge. Librarians, in this context,

play a pivotal role as initiators, supervisors, and catalysts who empower communities to engage critically with information, take ownership of their learning, and co-create meaningful programs. By functioning as transformative intellectuals, librarians facilitate inclusive learning processes that affirm the library's role as a democratic institution, offering 'free spaces' for community expression and development. These libraries serve as bridges connecting local realities to the broader social frameworks. However, this study primarily focuses on the perspectives of librarians and community members and does not extensively explore the institutional, policy, or professional development dimensions that influence the broader ecosystem of transformative librarianship. Future research is needed to deepen our understanding of the relationship between transformative librarianship and transformative library development, particularly in exploring the multifaceted roles that librarians assume in such contexts.

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