

## POWER RELATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF LITERACY IMPROVEMENT IN EAST JAVA, INDONESIA

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**ABSTRACT.** This study examines power relations in the context of literacy improvement in East Java Province. In addition to the persistent stagnation in TGM and IPLM scores, the Library and Archive Office (Dispusip) of East Java Province also faces unequal access to and varying quality of library services, which are crucial in improving literacy levels in East Java. These challenges are deeply intertwined with power relations, where leaders wield dominant influence over decision-making processes and policy implementation. This study employed a combination of descriptive and literature review methods, with data analysis conducted through a qualitative approach. It uncovered various factors and implications related to power relations within the Library and Archive Office (Dispusip) of East Java, particularly the hierarchical power structures and centralization. In this context, the Secretary of the Library Office (Sekdis) played a dominant role in shaping decision-making processes. The outcomes of centralized power encompassed power imbalances and internal conflicts within the Dispusip, including a noteworthy observation that numerous librarians launched programs without seeking approval from their leaders. Furthermore, the study highlights the librarians' challenges in adapting to evolving demands, primarily stemming from limited human resource capabilities, which consequently lead to a decline in their performance. In response to these intricate challenges, this study underscores the importance of promoting open dialogues through participatory forums, implementing the principles of good governance, and empowering individuals by enhancing their skills and knowledge base.

**Keywords:** Power Relations; Dispusip of East Java Province; Literacy Improvement; Library

### INTRODUCTION

This study delves into power relations concerning literacy improvement in East Java Province. In this study, power relations refer to the interactions among stakeholders that shape decision-making and policy implementation within the context of literacy improvement and the administration of the East Java Provincial Library and Library Service (Dispusip). Given that decision-making within an organization is a multifaceted process involving various stakeholders with diverse interests and sources of power, analyzing power relations becomes essential for comprehending the intricacies of policy formulation and decision-making within Dispusip management. Power relations can influence the decision-making process, who can influence it, and how the policies are implemented.

Foucault (2012) sees power as a strategy in human relations, which he called power relations. As such, the term power relations is a relationship formed between actors with different levels of power. In this case, it is the relationship between Secretary of Service and his subordinates, such as structural and functional employees in the East Java Dispusip.

In this study, the definition of literacy refers to the reports on the Reading Proficiency Level (TGM) and the Index of Community Literacy Development (IPLM) conducted by the National Library (Perpusnas). To foster a culture of public literacy, the government issued Minister of Home

Affairs Regulation No 18 of 2020 on Reporting and Evaluation of Local Government Implementation. One of the policy points outlined in this regulation is the designation of TGM and IPLM as the primary Policy Indicators for local governments in the library sector.

In addition to this regulation, the National Library also issued National Library Regulation No. 7 of 2020 on the National Library Strategic Plan for 2020-2024, with a focus on advancing literacy development and cultivating public reading habits.

According to the Perpusnas survey report, as of 2023, East Java Province's TGM is ranked 5th nationally with 68.54 points, which is lower than DKI Jakarta, West Java, Central Java, and DIY. Similarly, East Java's Human Development Index (HDI) is ranked 5th, behind South Kalimantan, South Sulawesi, DKI Jakarta, and DIY. In 2021, East Java's TGM and HDI also held the same positions. Despite having the highest number of accredited libraries nationally (liputan6.com, 2023), East Java's literacy level remains stagnant.

The Perpusnas report has limitations as it only sampled three locations within district/city libraries to draw conclusions about TGM and IPLM values. These three libraries were Surabaya City Library, Sampang Regency Library, and Madiun Regency Library. However, this sample was not a comprehensive representation of East Java as a whole, given the region's 29 districts and 9 cities. The selection of districts was influenced by specific

criteria, such as the allocation of budget funds through Special Allocation Funds (DAK) and De-concentration (dekon) in the previous or current year. Furthermore, the study surveyed individuals who visited libraries within these three regions and were administratively identified as residents of their respective districts/cities, not as residents of East Java.

The literacy challenge in East Java persists. As indicated in the 2021 Work Plan (Renja), critical issues endure, notably unequal access and varying library service quality. These issues manifest through low reading engagement, underdeveloped IT-based literacy infrastructure, insufficient library collections, limited literacy content, a lack of locally relevant library collections in East Java, and a shortage of librarians and staff.

Several other studies have also highlighted the poor performance of the East Java Dispusip. Hidyantari (2019) noted numerous obstacles in implementing the East Java Dispusip Library service standards. Among these obstacles is the insufficient number of managers or service officers. Furthermore, Pamungkas et al. (2021) also highlighted the inadequate website services provided by the East Java Dispusip. Several respondents struggled with finding features to view book availability. Some opined that the website was too complex. Another researcher, Pramana (2022) emphasized the subpar performance of Dispusip in managing ancient manuscripts. Presently, the management of ancient manuscripts is exclusively concerned with media transfer. No attention was given to physical preservation. Physical repairs are only conducted on book collections that are minimally damaged.

A closer examination reveals that some of the issues above are intricately linked to power relations. This is because power relations influence the decision-making and policy implementation of Dispusip management. In this case, influential officials within the agency hold a dominant role in both decision-making and policy implementation. According to Gramsci (2013), this dominance of decision-making can be seen as a manifestation of power, as these officials have control over valuable resources.

One of the negative consequences of dominant power, as proposed by Gramsci, is its tendency to generate conflicts of interest and dissatisfaction. Foucault (2012) asserts that it frequently leads to resistance, causing breakdowns in communication and collaboration.

Current studies of power relations in Indonesia concentrate primarily on the power dynamics

between local elites and political actors, particularly involving the executive and legislative branches. Such a focus is well-justified since local elites occupy a higher social stratum. In addition to power relations between local elites and institutions, it is also worth studying power relations within the organizational structure of local government, as well as the Library and Archives Office. However, there is a lack of extensive research on this topic.

Pradana (2020b) examines the power relations of religious figures in political contests. In this case, religious figures hold social status, namely political legitimacy. Another study by Royandi et al. (2018), analyzed the actors and power dynamics present in the management of marine resources in Palabuhanratu, West Java. The varying positions among fishing groups result in power relations in accessing marine resources. Avelino and Wittmayer (2016) analyzed the power relations between actors during the transition period and how power relations shifted between them. A study by Widodo et al., (2020) delves into the power relations between the president and vice president within the constitutional system of the Republic of Indonesia.

Due to the limited study on power relations that could enhance literacy in local government institutions, such as East Java's Dispusip, this study aims to contribute to filling that gap. Therefore, this study concentrates on several topics for discussion, including an overview of the East Java Provincial Library, hierarchy and centralization of power, power imbalance, competition and conflict of interest, as well as the lack of responsibility and innovation. Some of these topics will provide an outline of the dominant role in decision-making and employee relations. Additionally, this study presents an overview of formulated policies and made decisions. Factors that influence the decision-making process, including the dynamics of power relations between employees, are explored in the study. Additionally, the impact of policies and decisions on power relations within the Dispusip institution is examined.

## METHOD

This study utilized descriptive and literature study methods. The descriptive approach aims to present the management of East Java Provincial Dispusip as a unit of analysis and describe its relevant facts (Sugiyono, 2015). Meanwhile, the literature method is employed to collect relevant information and obtain a profound comprehension of literacy development in East Java. Data was collected by reviewing books, scholarly journals,

theses, dissertations, and other publicly available documents and policies of the Dispusip. This study was carried out for roughly three months in 2022. In-depth interviews were conducted with various stakeholders responsible for managing Dispusip, including the Head of Office, Secretary, Heads of Divisions, Head of Sub-division, and functional librarians. Facts and data were collected by tracing the news policies' progress of literacy in mainstream mass media to enrich the analysis. Qualitative data analysis was employed to analyze the collected data because literacy improvement is considered a multidimensional issue (Alwasilah, 2003). The information obtained from interviews was analyzed to identify patterns, themes, and power relations in the Dispusip's management. Additionally, policy documents were analyzed to gain insight into the direction of policies.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Despite the cultural significance of reading and a high literacy development index, improving literacy in East Java is not always straightforward. As of 2021, the province has been unable to advance its literacy index and remains in fifth place nationally. Furthermore, the improvement of literacy in East Java will be further constrained by power relations that play a significant role in the management of the East Java Dispusip. One of the obstacles to enhancing literacy is the lack of harmony among staff, including structural and functional officials, which will be examined in this section. However, before delving into these issues, this study will provide an overview of the management of the East Java Dispusip.

### Overview of East Java Dispusip

Following a 2-year closure due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Dispusip reopened its services in early 2022. One of the reinstated programs was the Bahasa Program (short for "Bahas Apa Saja" which can be translated to "Discussing Anything"). The program was implemented online and offline. The program addresses concerns about the Dispusip's decision to completely close its services, while also acknowledging the moral responsibility of librarians to work towards serving the community and performance indicators that must be met, particularly in terms of increasing literacy rates in East Java. Another activity that has been initiated is online storytelling through the Dolen program. The objective of the initiative was to meet the performance target of promoting literacy (Maghfiroh & Lestari, 2020, p. 6).

Several programs have seen both successes and discontinuations. For instance, the literacy radio program, which was active for five years, has now been discontinued, and its broadcast room is filled with empty boxes, despite the radio transmitter remaining in place. While there are plans to reintroduce the Literacy Radio program, there is currently no program concept available for librarians to implement. Furthermore, the mobile library program is not operating optimally. The East Java Dispusip has acquired numerous Mobile Library Cars (MPKs) from the National Library and local budget allocations. However, the majority of these MPKs are stored in the garage, with only one in daily operation. This limitation is primarily due to a shortage of human resources, specifically librarian who can drive. It's noteworthy that there is an existing gender disparity within the librarian profession, with fewer male librarians than female librarians.

The 2022 ASN data on library professionals illustrates this gap, with only 11 male librarians compared to 24 female librarians. It is also worth mentioning that while not regulated, the typical MPK driver tends to be male. Furthermore, the eleven male librarians are primarily seasoned professionals, and many are of advanced age. Conversely, younger librarians are often assigned to administrative roles rather than direct library services.

Other than the substantial workloads, many librarians grapple with keeping pace with technological advancements (Hamrul et al., 2023, p. 249), particularly since the equalization process that changed their job from structural to functional jobs. Librarians have also expressed difficulties in accruing credit points (Saleh, 2009; Widayanti, 2016, p. 141). Presently, research articles serve as the predominant means of accumulating credit points. However, the productivity of librarians in generating scientific articles is less than optimal. (Novianto, 2020, p. 64). Several new librarians have indicated a lack of familiarity with regulations regarding credit points for librarians. Prior to assuming their role as librarians, they have a limited understanding of the responsibilities associated with being a librarian, including the obligation to attain credit points.

They assume that the library services merely involve serving visitors, managing book collections, overseeing book returns and loans, and related tasks. However, upon assuming the role of librarians, they encounter additional obligations, such as meeting performance indicators within the library sector. Furthermore, they are expected to have good performance to contribute to achieving the target of 4 million library visits in East Java by 2022.

## Hierarchy and Centralization of Power

On numerous occasions, the initiated programs encountered delays in execution. Bureaucratic constraints impose limitations on the administrative processes at the Dispusip. For example, the process of signing letters by the Secretary of Service is time-consuming due to the need for multiple corrections. Many employees have voiced concerns about the administrative correspondence issues. According to these employees, processing a single letter often consumes a significant amount of time. These employees also perceive inconsistencies in the correspondence process. They are uncertain about the Secretary's requirements, as they have already implemented the requested corrections.

The role of the Head of Service, as the organizational leader, remains ambiguous, as most organizational decisions are delegated to the Secretary. Based on accounts from multiple employees, it appears that the Head of Service engages in more extensive communication with external parties, primarily due to close connections with regional leaders, such as the governor. The Head of Service consistently participates in crucial meetings with the governor. Consequently, it seems that all internal matters are delegated to the Secretary, including those related to activity program.

As a result, the Secretary appears to be the primary decision-maker. On numerous occasions, although occupying the highest position within the organization, the Head of Service has followed the lead of the Secretary of Service (hereinafter is referred to as the Secretary). Despite having assumed the position for a few months, the Secretary wields significant power, while other stakeholders possess limited influence. Furthermore, the Secretary exerts dominant influence over policy-making, especially concerning literacy improvement.

This observation challenges Foucault's theory (1995) in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Foucault (1995) analysis of power, knowledge, and institutional structures in society provides insight into how seasoned officials can perpetuate their influence through subtle power tactics. In addition to Foucault, Mills (1963) explains how political elites and seasoned officials exert their power and sway government policy in American politics. Similarly, Weber (1965) maintains that experienced officials can exercise a dominant role in government due to their expertise and experience.

These theories posit that seasoned officials or political elites hold significant and commanding sway in deciding political matters and shaping the power dynamics of the government. These theories

propose that seasoned officials have access to substantial political and economic resources, as well as a wealth of knowledge and experience, enabling them to retain power and exert significant influence on policy-making. In the case of East Java Dispusip, these theories appear to be inapplicable.

As a new official, the Secretary's policies were not immediately accepted by many functional and structural staff who did not support the implemented policies. The strained relations and communication between the secretary and employees resulted in a flawed activity program. Librarians engaged in various activities that may not have had the Secretary's approval.

The disapproval of these activities by the Secretary led to disharmony between superiors and subordinates. New officials, including the head of the sub-district secretary, were perceived to lack an understanding of literacy and library regulations. Many senior employees acknowledged that some of the policies implemented by the leaders were perceived as not relevant to the core tasks and functions of librarians. Conversely, the leaders believed that they had the best understanding of how the institution should operate.

A clear instance of disharmony between the leaders and subordinates was reflected in the way leaders allocated the budget for each area. The Secretary's ability to identify the functions and requirements when dividing the budget amount was regarded as inadequate. This situation is unprecedented in previous years at the Dispusip. In the past, the budget for each division was divided equally, regardless of the activity programs. However, according to employees in the planning sector, the budget allocation for 2022 failed to consider functions and needs. The budget from the previous year no longer serves as a reference point.

The budgeting policy is perceived to disadvantage library affairs, as there are more library programs than archival affairs. Many programs proposed by librarians and archivists were not approved. According to librarians, the Secretary views all the activities of librarians and archivists as flawed and meaningless. Their conflicting perspectives make functionalists, such as librarians, reluctant to communicate. The Secretary is perceived as incapable of engaging the employees.

The theory of power relations suggests that certain individuals or groups will dominate an official position and tend to control the institutions and important resources in the organization. This theory is exemplified by the leadership role of the Dispusip Secretary, who oversees the hiring and

promotion process, budget and resource allocation, and policy and decision-making mechanisms. As a result, the Secretary is able to maintain dominance over the office. The dominance of specific ideologies and beliefs held by powerful groups or individuals is a crucial aspect of official position dominance. Such ideologies can significantly influence policies and decisions made within the office, serving as a means of justifying their control over resources and power (Gramsci, 2013). According to Gramsci's power relations theory, the state apparatus and bureaucracy play a vital role in preserving and supporting the ruler's domination. The bureaucracy can influence policy and control state institutions and resources (Hesketh, 2019, p. 3; (Salem, 2021).

### Power Imbalance

The disharmony and dominance of the Head of the Sub-District Secretary create an imbalance within Dispusip. Due to their authority, officials such as the secretary often wield more power than other stakeholders, including functional groups. Such inequality can lead to unfairness in decision-making and policy implementation. At times, leaders may employ any means necessary to acquire power within a structured institution (Rosenblatt, 2012, p. 238).

The disharmonious relationship between leaders and functional groups hinders the implementation of important activities. For instance, the award ceremony for various library categories had to be postponed because the evaluation result that revealed a particular education institution under the media spotlight as the winner was not approved. The Head of the Service disagreed with the outcome, citing potential negative implications for the provincial government's image. Nevertheless, this matter is unrelated to the library. The evaluation team, consisting of librarians, determined that the educational institution meets high standards for library management, particularly in terms of robust library management practices.

The close relationship between the Head of the Service and the governor is one of the factors that contributed to the delay in announcing the winner, which is typically a widely publicized event. One of the reasons is that the Head of Dispusip disagreed with the assessment results, aiming to safeguard the governor's image. Internal politics and interactions between individuals can create power imbalances. Certain individuals or groups may possess a closer relationship with specific powers or authorities, affording them advantages in promotion, budgets, and other benefits (Pradana, 2020a, p. 158).

The poor alignment and communication between leaders and subordinates are also apparent in the social inclusion-based library program. One such program is a Barber training program. The program's foremost objective was to provide vocational training in hair-cutting to the local community, focusing on recent high school graduates. The expectation was that graduates of the training program would have the necessary skills to start and run their own barbershops in the vicinity of their homes. The librarians were among the initiators of the program, specifically selecting hair-cutting training due to its ease of learning and practice. Furthermore, establishing a barbershop business requires minimal investment, as the Dispusip has allocated funds to support the participants' proposed plans.

However, the program only carried out two out of the planned ten meetings due to organizational changes. The new Secretary replaced the program with public speaking training, which no longer targeted the community but was designed for librarians. The librarians hope that public speaking training will also be available to the community. The primary aim of the social inclusion program is to prioritize community engagement since it serves as an indicator of librarians' performance. Currently, functional librarians are constrained in their activities and primarily follow instructions.

The shift from barber training to public speaking training is not entirely without merit. The barber training program misses its target because participants enrolling in the training are already in the barbershop business, whereas the intended audience should be job seekers. This perspective is viewed unfavorably by the Secretary, who deems the librarians' skills to be of greater importance, with internal training taking precedence before external training.

In addition to leadership issues, there is disharmony among the librarians. Many employees report being segmented into their own groups, both among the older and newer librarians and across different fields. Some librarians even initiate programs without clear leadership direction. For example, some embarked on official travel without adhering to established procedures or obtaining approval from the leaders. Consequently, the leaders became dismayed by the librarians' actions, although the librarians contended that they personally financed the expenses of the official trip.

Moreover, ineffective communication proved to be a significant obstacle. Effective communication is crucial within organizations (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). When left unaddressed, it can have a

detrimental impact on relationships between employees and superiors. Poorly received messages can create negative impressions of the sender (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) and damage personal relationship. Issues that start as technical problems has shifted to personal issues. Such issues can be challenging to resolve.

Furthermore, these problems related to coordination and communication pose obstacles to addressing Dispusip's primary issues that are outlined in the annual planning documents. The primary issue regarding literacy in East Java, as per the 2021 Work Plan (Renja), pertains to the unequal availability and quality of library services. Some of these issues stem from poor reading behavior, the absence of IT-based literacy infrastructure development, inadequate library collections, insufficient literacy materials, the absence of library collections on local matters, and the limited number of librarians and library staff.

Additionally, the Dispusip is tasked with enhancing the Reading Proficiency Level (TGM), which currently ranks fifth nationally. According to data from Perpustakaan, the provinces with the highest number of libraries are predominantly located in Java. West Java Province boasts the most libraries, with 24,891, followed by Central Java Province (24,130), East Java Province (23,576), and North Sumatra Province (10,704). In contrast, North Kalimantan Province (538 libraries) and West Papua Province (823 libraries) have the fewest libraries (liputan6.com, 2023).

In addition to TGM and IPLM, East Java Province ranks at the lower end of the National Reading Literacy Activity index. According to data from the Ministry of Education and Culture in 2019, East Java Province's Alibaca Index ranks 26th out of 34 provinces, with a value of 33.19. Multiple dimensions affecting Alibaca received low scores, including the province's proficiency dimension index, which ranked 28th. This dimension highlights the ongoing challenge individuals face in accessing literacy materials (Badan Penelitian dan Pengembangan & Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2019). Similarly, the alternative dimension also scored quite low, with East Java ranking 30th in this aspect. This dimension described the use of electronic and information technology devices to access literacy materials.

### **Competition and conflict of interest**

One potential reason for the Secretary's dominant decision-making as a leader could be attributed to the Secretary's perspective on the underdeveloped and slow performance ecosystem

within the Dispusip. This perspective is a natural consequence of the Secretary's extensive experience in various official agencies across East Java. The Secretary asserts that serving as a Dispusip secretary presents the most significant challenge. The strained relations between the Secretary and the staff are, in part, a result of the outdated technological infrastructure and work processes within the Dispusip. The Secretary has remarked that Dispusip's work processes lag behind other agencies by twenty years.

Furthermore, the Secretary harbors reservations about specific librarians and archivists, believing that some employees are not performing to their maximum potential. According to the Secretary, the Dispusip requires competent leadership and managerial skills. Suhartini (2015) stated that skills and abilities have a positive and significant influence on employee performance. Additionally, it is imperative that employees possess not only intelligence but also ethical values, as emphasized by the Secretary. An example that left the Secretary frustrated was the failure of the archivists to document important, but seemingly insignificant, meeting minutes.

Furthermore, from the perspective of the Secretary, certain senior librarians have not been able to set a positive example. Many librarians disagree with the Secretary's decisions, and they actively discourage their peers from adhering to the Secretary's policies. The Secretary perceives that the librarians do not follow his instructions. The organizational structure of the intermediate expert librarians leads them to believe that their position is on par with that of the Secretary. These expert and senior librarians have previously held roles as officials within the Dispusip. Specifically, they previously served as heads of service or secretaries. Their transition to functional roles was primarily aimed at extending their tenure.

Under Indonesia's civil servant performance system, the retirement age for administrative officials, junior expert functional officials, first expert functional officials, and skilled functional officials is 58 years. In contrast, high-ranking officials and middle functional officials retire at 60 years old. Furthermore, civil servants who hold the position of main expert functional official can work until they are 65 years old, especially if their functional roles involve direct coordination with the leaders. Librarians are subordinates with direct responsibility to middle high-ranking officials, in this case, the Head of Service.

However, librarians who previously held high-ranking positions often continue to perceive

themselves as leaders. Consequently, they may not fully respect the instructions of structural officials, and their internal contributions to the Dispusip may be lacking. This is apparent in some of the activities they engage in, where they often give precedence to direct involvement in different districts and cities as speakers at regional libraries. They often neglect conducting reviews or research aimed at improving the future of libraries, despite the importance of internal improvement. (Figure 1.)

The performance of functional staff, specifically librarians, plays a pivotal role in shaping the power relations within East Java Dispusip. The leadership at Dispusip was taken aback by the librarians' notably low competencies. Furthermore, librarians frequently deviate from the directives set by the leadership. Some independently-minded staff have criticized the programs initiated and executed by librarians, claiming that they often miss the mark, including the school coaching initiative.

Many librarians choose to engage directly with district/city library management to share their expertise on library management. It's important to note that the Dispusip's librarians still require further development due to limitations in human resource capacity. Numerous regional programs do not align with their primary tasks and functions, and certain coaching programs, such as those targeting high school-level libraries in the regions, remain unimplemented.

### Librarians' Inability to Adapt to Change

The limited adaptability of functional staff, namely librarians, to changes in the work environment can hinder their ability to confront challenges or adapt to new policies, technologies, and demands. This lack of adaptability can render them susceptible to a decrease in their standing or influence in power dynamics. Such inflexibility often poses challenges and resistance during leadership transitions (Bridges, 2009). Without this adaptability, employees, in this case, librarians, frequently resist change. This situation is often rooted in uncertainty, fear of change, or conflicts with existing values and beliefs. In power relations, the inability to face challenges and changes can be related to resistance to changes that have the potential to shift power and change established power dynamics (Val & Fuentes, 2003).

In the context of the Dispusip, resistance and low adaptability to change are influenced by a work culture that tends to remain within a comfort zone, with limited challenges and minimal training activities. Therefore, cultural adaptation becomes crucial for individual success, as resistance due to adaptability issues arises when employees lack training and face few challenges (Nesbit & Lam, 2014; Zheng et al., 2010).

The Secretary and head of the department aim to foster healthy competition among librarians, emphasizing the importance of librarians possessing

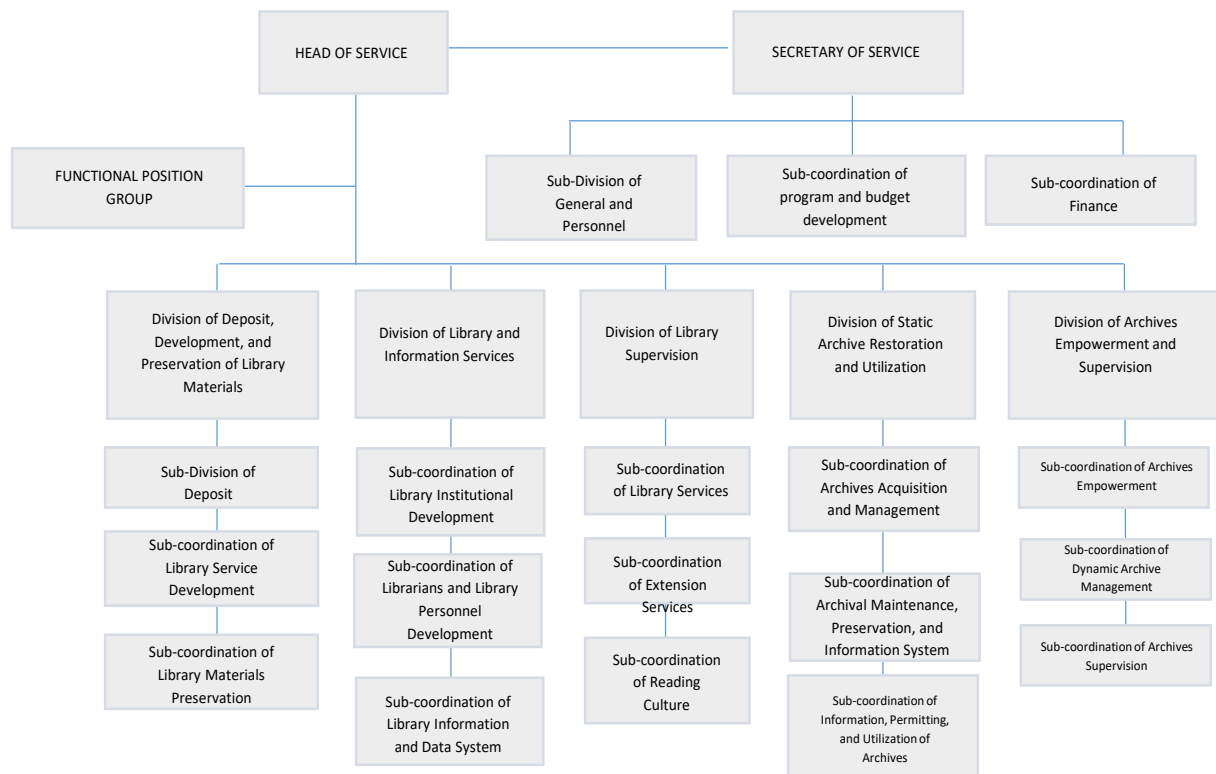


Figure 1. Organizational structure of the East Java Provincial Library and Archives Office according to East Java Governor Regulation No. 100 of 2022

both technical and managerial skills. The limited capabilities of librarians become evident when examining their credit points submissions. For instance, numerous expert librarians lack the ability to formulate ideas and compose research, although this is the physical evidence required for credit point submissions. The ability to formulate research methods among librarians is also low.

Many librarians also unable to create terms of reference that align with the primary objectives of activity programs. Both the head of service and the secretary are awaiting detailed program ideas from librarians in the form of activity proposals. Consequently, it is not surprising that many activities are initiated by the leadership, even though some librarians argue that these activities contradict the essence of literacy and reading culture.

An employee in the planning section pointed out that if all librarians were capable of drafting the term of reference for the activities they initiate, it would significantly simplify the task of the planning and budget section. This is because the planning department has traditionally been responsible for drafting initial program terms of reference, which are subsequently developed into planning documents. One of the Dispusip Librarian acknowledged that, up to this point, all programs are communicated orally.

### **Lack of Responsibility**

The leaders questioned the librarians' responsibility for the assigned tasks, particularly those related to the Dispusip's image. An instance of such a case was the library management cooperation with the Indonesian Navy in Semare, Kraton, Pasuruan, East Java. The Navy provided a location for the library and requested the Dispusip to provide library equipment such as books, tables, chairs, and others.

Following a survey, the Dispusip agreed to provide resources such as bookshelves, tables, chairs, service personnel, and library technology installations as requested by the Navy. A middle level librarian was appointed to oversee the operation. However, the approved equipment never arrived. According to the Secretary, the Navy had sent a letter regarding the equipment to the Dispusip but had not received a response. As such, the Secretary initiated discussions with the Navy and requested support from the National Library. Initially, the Secretary's plan was to donate books, but upon further review, there was a concern that the government audit agency would perceive this donation as a risk.

Subsequently, the Dispusip requests a donation through CSR funding from third parties. However, it also faced constraints as these parties required

that the donation be made directly, bypassing the Dispusip. Further, the Dispusip approached Regional Government-Owned Enterprises (BUMD), but this attempt was also unsuccessful. The BUMD had specific requirements, particularly related to the standard of assistance for village libraries, which Dispusip could not fulfill. Lastly, the librarians purchased books without consulting the leaders, and this procurement was never approved by the Secretary.

The budget for the procurement was also unclear. According to the librarians, funding of up to Rp150 million was already available for this activity. However, upon confirmation with the budget section, they were unaware of the funds. The librarian tasked with managing it stated that they had heard directly from the Head of Service that the funds were available. Some librarians felt embarrassed, as they had not taken necessary action despite being instructed by the Head of Service. At the time of this study, the cooperation between Dispusip and the Navy was still unclear. The Secretary stated that they had terminated its cooperation with the Navy since none of the librarians were willing to create necessary documents, such as proposals and decrees, to continue the cooperation.

As a result of this termination, the librarians shifted responsibility to one another. The incident even made leaders such as the Secretary and Head of Service have to intervene in negotiations, which ultimately failed. This incident underscores the librarians' limited negotiation skills in ensuring program success.

In power relations, proficient negotiation skills are essential for reaching agreements and serving mutual interests. However, their limited capabilities hinder their ability to negotiate effectively, rendering them easily directed or controlled by those with superior skills. According to power relations theory, this situation perpetuates the dominance of power. When human resources are unable to cope with challenges and changes, the status quo is likely to persist, and resistance to change may emerge. Consequently, those already in power may maintain their positions without offering opportunities for participation or input from others.

If this culture persists, it may curtail opportunities for innovation within the institution. The inability to address challenges and change may result in missed opportunities for innovation. Employees who cannot adapt may fail to recognize and seize new opportunities or generate innovative ideas that can enhance efficiency and effectiveness within power relations



The library's image as an institution that employs outcasts may persist due to the perpetuation of such a culture. When confronted with challenges and changes, employees may seek direction and certainty from their leaders. Unfortunately, they may select leaders who lack creative ideas, innovation, and the ability to lead effectively in complex and ever-changing circumstances. This can result in ineffective power dynamics and a lack of progress.

## CONCLUSION

Power relations play a pivotal role in service management in the regions. In the Dispusip's management, these relations can significantly influence decision-making, resource allocation, and policy and program development. In this context, limited human resource capabilities can adversely affect power dynamics.

Various strategies can be explored to address issues related to dominant power, resistance, adaptability challenges, and the constraints posed by limited human resource capabilities. One such approach is to promote active participation and engagement of all stakeholders to reduce inequality. This can be accomplished through open dialogue facilitated by participatory forums, which can contribute to a more equitable distribution of power since a lack of communication and collaboration between individuals or groups in an institution can affect power relations. Insufficient communication or collaboration can hinder the flow of information and participation, thereby influencing the distribution of power within the institution.

Furthermore, applying good governance principles can enhance transparency in organizational actions and decision-making while reinforcing accountability mechanisms can aid in curbing the abuse and consolidation of power. Additionally, enhancing human resource capabilities necessitates the development of skills and education among individuals within the organization, which can help narrow the power disparity. This equips them with the essential competencies and knowledge required to make substantial contributions to decision-making processes. It also enables them to adeptly navigate the challenges presented by hierarchical and centralized power structures.

One potential solution to address excessive power imbalances is implementing a more horizontal organizational structure. Such a structure would distribute authority and decision-making across various levels, thereby promoting increased participation,

engagement, and accountability throughout the organization.

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