Improvement of School Librarians' Abilities in Library Management with SLIMS Automation Software

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Abstract

Purpose: This research paper aims to highlight the importance of enhancing the skills and abilities of librarians in managing information within the context of school libraries. The study specifically focuses on the use of SLIMS automation software for school library management, addressing the significance of this endeavour in the field of information technology.

Method: A workshop conducted on September 18, 2021, provided hands-on training for librarians in SLIMS software, covering installation, circulation, and reporting. Post-workshop support was provided through a WhatsApp group.

Practical Applications: This research benefits both librarians, who gain vital IT skills, and the education sector, where efficient library management leads to improved information access and operations.

Conclusion: By improving librarian skills with SLIMS software, this study contributes to more effective school library management, benefiting students and educators alike.

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Introduction

The rapid development of information technology and communication has been ongoing over time. The swift and substantial progress in information technology has had a profound impact on various aspects of human life (Elpas, 2020; Hasanah et al., 2022). One significant change resulting from this technological advancement is the easy and fast access to information (Setiawan, 2018). Science and technology demand that we remain open to the changes taking place. In order to keep up with current technological advancements and prepare for future progress, an institution must be capable of adopting technology to improve its performance. With the assistance of information technology, an institution's performance can be effective and efficient in providing access to information and disseminating it to users (Firnanda Al-Islama Achyunda Putra et al., 2023; Septian & R, 2020).

One institution that collects and disseminates information to users is the library. The library is an institution that gathers printed and recorded knowledge, managing it in a specialized manner to fulfil the intellectual needs of its users through various knowledge interaction methods (Basuki, 2020). A library cannot function effectively without the support of human resources (HR), and in a library, HR is referred to as a librarian. According to (Ismanto, 2019), librarians are professionals who work in libraries. In more explicit terms, librarians are individuals with competencies acquired through education or library training, and they have the responsibility for managing and providing library services (Yuliani, 2019). According to (Rakhmayanti et al., 2019) and (Green, 2018), librarians are qualified and professional educational personnel responsible for planning and managing school libraries, supported by an adequate workforce, collaborating with all school community members, and interacting with public libraries and others. Based on these two definitions, it is understood that librarians are individuals with expertise in library management who can collaborate and network with other libraries.

As a public service institution that provides information services, libraries must continue to provide the best services to the community (Kurniasih, 2018; Nasrullah, 2022). A library that operates in the field of information services must provide good treatment to its consumers, including transforming a previously manual library into an automated one (Ulinafiah & Wiyani, 2019; Windarsih, 2017). Automation involves the use of computers in every stage of library work in an integrated manner using a specific system. Library automation is a system within the library that utilizes information technology, where library activities are well integrated (Zulhalim et al., 2019). The presence of an automation system makes it easier for users to access information and allows library staff to work more effectively and efficiently (Rahayu & Agustin, 2018). According to (Kurniawan et al., 2021), library automation is the process or result of creating self-acting or self-controlling machines without human intervention in the various applications of information technology for library purposes, from acquisition to providing information services to readers.

Currently, there are many library automation software options, both paid and free (open source). One of the free (open source) library software is Senayan Library Management System (SliMS). SLIMS is a library automation application capable of performing library tasks such as online public access catalogue (OPAC) searches, bibliographies, circulation services, membership management, reporting, and serial publication control (Kusmawati & Anas, 2021). SLIMS users are spread across the entire archipelago, and they have a user community known as the SLIMS community. This is an advantage of SLIMS automation software because it is supported by a community ready to assist those facing difficulties with installation and application. SLIMS software is open source, allowing it to be distributed for free, and it does not prohibit selling or providing the software as a component of other software development.

The development of information technology in libraries can only proceed with human resources (HR) capable of operating a system to manage the library. One such system that can be used is SLIMS. Although SLIMS was first released in 2007, many educational

institutions, such as schools, still need to be made aware of the existence of free library automation software like SLIMS.

Based on observations conducted by the community service team in Banding Agung, it was found that schools in the area needed to utilize information technology, especially library automation, in managing their school libraries, and library management was still done manually. Given the problem described above, the community service team from Universitas Terbuka is interested in conducting community service in the form of socialization and training on SLIMS automation software in the Banding Agung District to enhance the capabilities of school librarians in managing libraries in the Banding Agung District.

Method

The community service activity took place on September 18, 2021. The community service partner was the school librarians located in the Banding Agung District, South OKU Regency, South Sumatra. The community service activities related to enhancing the capabilities of school librarians in managing libraries with SLIMS software were divided into four stages:

Figure 1. The flow of community service implementation

Result

The school librarians in the Banding Agung District were trained on September 18, 2021. The Open University community service team consisted of 5 members, including 1 instructor and 4 training facilitators. The number of participants for the librarian skills enhancement training was limited to 22 school librarians due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The following is the flow of the Open University community service implementation:

1. Observation and Socialization

    The community service activities were conducted at SD Negeri 01 Banding Agung. The first step was observation and communication with the headmaster of SDN Banding Agung, who was the partner institution for the Open University community service activities. The headmaster of SDN Banding Agung welcomed and agreed to host the librarian skills enhancement training in library automation. Before conducting the training, the community service team requested the data of school librarians in Banding Agung to be included in a WhatsApp group to facilitate coordination and socialization of the SLIMS program with the school librarians in Banding Agung.

2. Training

    Twenty-two school librarians in Banding Agung attended the training on SLIMS automation software. The training took place on Saturday, September 18, 2021, to ensure that librarians could participate. The training agenda included activities as listed in the table below:

Table 1. Training Agenda

No	Time	Activity
1	08.00-08.30	Opening of the training event
2	08.30-12.00	SLIMS automation training: System menu, Master File menu, Bibliography Menu
3	12.00 – 13.00	ISHOMA (break)
4	13.00 – 15.00	SLIMS automation training; Membership menu, Circulation menu
5	15.00 – 15.15	Coffee break
6	15.15 - 16.50	Tips and tricks for managing school libraries with SLIMS automation software
7	15.50-16.00	Closing ceremony

The training session for enhancing automation with SLIMS software started at 8:30 AM Western Indonesian Time (WIB). The training covered all the menus available in the SLIMS software, which can assist librarians in managing school libraries quickly and efficiently with the support of information technology. Before the training, the community service team shared the download link for SLIMS automation software in the WhatsApp group, along with instructions on how to run the SLIMS automation software so that participants could follow the material during the training.

The training material was delivered by one instructor and assisted by four facilitators. The training content included the configuration of the system menu, with the aim of enabling participants to manage the automation system comprehensively, from password settings to user system configuration. Next was the master file menu, which served as a reference for entering bibliographic data. The bibliography menu was used for inputting collection data, both printed and non-printed, into the automation software. The membership menu was used to input library members into the SLIMS software, and the circulation menu was used to process book borrowing, returning, and ordering.

The final part of the training covered tips and tricks for managing libraries with SLIMS software, such as using a barcode reader as a tool for circulation processes. It also involved the use of the library attendance menu with SLIMS software, where library users could simply scan their membership card barcode to enter the library and help librarians maintain an online attendance list without using a physical logbook.

Figure 2. SLIMS Training Activities

3. Guidance and Monitoring

After conducting the community service training, the community service team continued to provide guidance and monitoring to the training participants, who were the school librarians in Banding Agung. The guidance and monitoring activities were carried out using social media platforms such as WhatsApp and Microsoft Teams for face-to-face guidance and interaction with the librarians participating in the skills

enhancement training with the SLIMS automation system.

The purpose of this guidance was to monitor and track the progress of the training participants in using the SLIMS automation software. This was done so that participants could independently run and apply the SLIMS automation software in their respective schools. The Open University community service team understood that the training provided was relatively brief, and not all participants could grasp everything presented by the training instructor within a short period.

Figure 3. Guidance Using WhatsApp
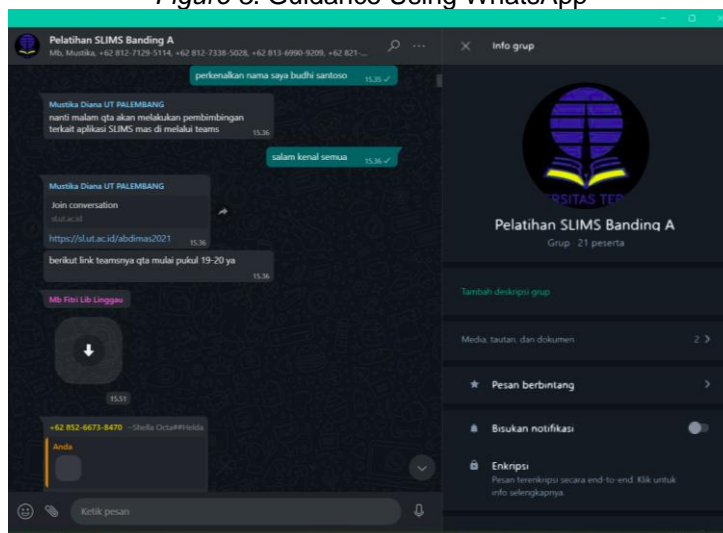
Discussion

A library is an institution that professionally manages collections of written, printed, and/or recorded works using standardized systems to meet the educational, research, preservation, information, and recreational needs of its patrons. As custodians of intellectual works, librarians have a responsibility to disseminate information to their patrons, and this dissemination requires support from various parties, including librarians.

Librarians are human resources who play a pivotal role in the management of libraries, especially school libraries. Effective library management is essential in this context. Library management is the effort to achieve objectives by utilizing human resources, information, systems, and funding while considering the functions, roles, and skills of management. Improving the capabilities or competencies of librarians can be achieved through training, workshops, and participation in seminars, both at the national and international levels.

Community service was conducted in the Banding Agung district, and the purpose of this training was to enhance the competence of librarians in managing libraries, particularly school libraries. There were several stages in the training to improve the competence of librarians, especially in the field of information technology, specifically library automation, including observation, training, and mentoring. Training participants, especially librarians in the Banding Agung district, showed enthusiasm for this training. After the training, there was still mentoring for librarians in using the library automation software SLIMS so that all librarians would be able to use this software effectively.

Conclusion

The community service activity conducted at SDN Banding Agung went smoothly. The completed activities included enhancing proficiency in library management using the SLIMS library automation software. There were 22 school librarians from Banding Agung who participated in the training. The training covered library management using the SLIMS

automation software, starting from system configuration, book data input, library member registration, circulation processes (borrowing, returning, and ordering), reporting, and tips and tricks for using the SLIMS automation software.

To deepen the participants' understanding of the SLIMS software, the Open University Community Service Team conducted mentoring and monitoring activities. Through these activities, the training participants, namely school librarians in Banding Agung, will gain a better understanding of the SLIMS automation software and be able to use and implement it in their respective libraries.

Acknowledgements

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