Performance of Boundary Role Persons in the Library

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Abstract

Boundary role person is a term that is used for individuals who work as frontlines of an organization. They are the persons who directly interact with people outside the organization. In the library setting, the front liners of a library is called as librarian who is responsible for serving library users in service department. This study aims to investigate the extent to which the performance of librarians in the service department serves as boundary role persons in the library while serving library users. This is a descriptive qualitative research, using questionnaire as the main research instrument to collect the data. The instrument is distributed to numerous library users from three universities in West Sumatera particularly UIN Imam Bonjol Library, Unversitas Negeri Padang Library, and Bung Hatta University Library, considering six variables such as 1)ability to work under pressure; 2) work integrity and high commitment; 3) capability to work independently; 4) quick to learn and understand various changes; 5) effective persuasion and communication; 6) mastery of technology. The result reveals several findings: 1) The librarians in Universitas Negeri Padang show a better performance even though their work under pressure. This condition proves by 86,13% of library users who expressed their satisfaction to them; additionally 2) according to 79, 2% of library users, the boundary role person in the library also shows a great integrity and high work commitment; 3) regarding the

ability to work independently, 72,27% of library users approved it; 4) 73,26% of library users express their satisfaction regarding the ability of librarians to learn and understand various changes; 5) the boundary role person in the library of the university also performs a high persuasion in communication, this situation is proved by 59,4% of library users who indicated satisfaction. Nevertheless, there are 50.49% respondent who expressed their dissatisfaction regarding the ability of librarians in   6) mastering technology. Therefore, it is evident that the overall responses obtained from the distributed questionnaire are quite positive, with 66,33% of library user's satisfaction regarding the performance of librarians that serves as boundary role person in the library of Universitas Negeri Padang.

Keywords: Performance; boundary role persons; librarian

Introduction

Boundary role person is a term that refers to individuals who are situated at the orgnaization frontliner, tasked with a spearheading the establishment of positive relations and cooperation with external organization circumstances. The term of "boundary" was emerged by Adamas in 1976, encompasses those individuals strategically positioned at the organization's boundary line, which then known as the concept of person-role boundaries (Ohlin, 2016).These boundary role persons are functioning as mediators to facilitate organization and external parties to exchange numerous information's. Therefore, it is evident that boundary role person plays a significant role for organization's activities because it can significantly support organization in achieving its vision and mission (Saadah, 2018).Additionally, boundary role person also defines as individuals who actively builds networks and communicates with external communities. In the organizational circumstances, there are two levels of boundary role person, which is known as macro and micro levels (Johnson & Chang, 2018). At the macro level, boundary role persons are observed from organizational standpoint, encompassing the boundaries between organization and external parties. While on the micro level, boundary role persons are viewed through individual positions, illustrating how individuals interact with society and environment as the representative of the organization.

Psychologically, individuals in boundary roles engage intensively with the external parties, functioning as influential agents within organization both internally and externally. A crucial skill for boundary role person is the ability to communicate persuasively, facilitating interaction among external communities and organization. The communication skill that exhibited by individuals in boundary role serves as a tool for marketing and promoting the organization to the public society(Chang & Huang, 2014). A strong-bone relationship between organization and public society will be established when the boundary role person who serves as the representative of organization serious in executing their duties and responsibilities.

Furthermore, the boundary role operates on two fronts. *Firstly*, it serves as a crucial agent for processing and facilitating information, both originating from internal and external of organizational circumstances. *Secondly*, the boundary role person serves as a representative of the organization, functioning to maintain and foster such positive relationship with external parties of organization. Additionally, besides these two main roles, the boundary role person also extends to processing information from the external community, being a liaison between the external community and organization desires. Therefore, based on the remarked discussion, the boundary role persons are adept at conveying information about the aspirations, expectations, and external needs(Sa'adah, et all, 2019).

Moreover, boundaries also serve several key functions such as: 1) building internal and external networks, 2) identifying potential problems, 3) translating knowledge back into organizational culture, 4) influencing and informing both internal and external stakeholders, and 5) providing and seeking support. Additionally, boundaries also play crucial roles as, 1) demarcation points at the interface of the organization and the environment, 2) as a protector from external stressors, and 3) regulators of information flow between the organization and its environment, (Ekkerink, 2008).

The concept of boundary role persons is individuals working at the organizational frontier with several attributes 1) ability to work under pressure; 2) demonstrate work integrity and high work commitment; 3) capable of working independently; 4) quick to learn and understand

changes; 5) possess strong persuasive communication skills, and 6) mastery technology(Himam, 2013).Through these attributes, it implies that a boundary role person should exhibit several characteristic such as 1) being more closely connected to the external circumstance; 2) serving as a good representative for the organization while engage with external parties; and 3) being agent of the organization to influence the external parties of the organization (Chang, 2000).

Libraries become one of organizations that are established by government as public facilities, serve as vital sources and disseminators of information. In this circumstance, librarians as persons who have a good skill in service provision play a crucial role to support library activities. It is because, they cultivate strong relationship not only with library users but also with the wider public beyond the library (Laugu & Zulaikha, 2015). However, as the role of library has evolved, transforming them from mere information repositories into community service center, library must continually strive to meet the diverse needs of users to foster a positive image and enhance library's value.

In the library, those who extensively interacts with library's external community are librarians who work in the user service department. In this context, librarians serve as the frontline of the library to serve the needs of library users. This is considered important because the service that is provided by librarians in the frontline can significantly shape the library's overall image-either positively or negatively. Thus, it is evident that the quality of service and communication from librarians can directly impact to the library's overall quality. This condition aligns with the principle of boundary role person concept which emphasizing that librarians in the services department must be mastering in persuasive communication skill both orally and writing. Additionally, they also should be adept at negotiation particularly when addressing the unmet needs of library users (Hardiningtyas, 2022).

Librarians which serve as a boundary role person in the library are also expected to be able to demonstrate creativity in developing libraries and fostering relationship with library users. Establishing such good relationship with library users hinges on providing information that can

meet their needs. These requirements are relate with a boundary role person that must be able to effectively manage information to build connection with external communities such as library users (Verma & Singh, 2019).

Refers to the remarked discussion, there are notable similarities between boundary role person and librarian. Both of them are the representative agents for organization, conveying information from within the organization to the external parties. In addition, both of them are also engaging in negotiations with external communities (library users) when their needs are unmet. In libraries, negotiations occur when users seek information that is not readily available, prompting them to explore alternative avenues. Both are spearheads for the formation of the organization's image and become mediators between the organization and parties outside the organization.

The function of boundary role persons in libraries is to bridge the gap between libraries and library users by facilitating effective communication, ensuring that users' information needs are met (Reyhan & Hermintoyo, 2019). According to Law of the Republic of Indonesia number 43 of 2007 article 1 paragraph 8 concerning libraries, librarians are tasked with managing libraries and providing services oriented towards the needs of library users.

This research focuses on examining the performance of library service staff as boundary role persons in the library, with a specific emphasis on the performance of library staff in the user service department. Investigating the performance of library staff in the service department is crucial, given that libraries operate as the organization-service sector. Negligence in their work may occur if there are no other financial incentives for library staff. Each library has the autonomy to determine its own performance indicators. The concept of boundary role persons can be applied to service department library staff, given their shared functions and responsibilities—maintaining the organization's reputation through quality service provision and serving as the organization's forefront in interacting with the external community.

Literature Review

Numerous researchers have explored the concept of boundary role person in various contexts. For instance, Tadepalli (2021) who measured the level of work stress in selling s product as a boundary role person in a profit organization. The concept of boundary role persons has also been studied from the perspective of bank tellers, serving as customer service representative in a regional bank, discussing the awareness level of bank tellers as personal boundaries in conveying messages between top management and mid-level management (Davis et al., 2014). Another research linked boundary role persons with promotional staff in higher education, considering them as representatives of organizations. This research explored boundary role persons' impact on organizational success, examining variables such as goal commitment, conscientiousness, communication climate, and fairness of wages received(Sa'adah, 2013). Form the remarked previous researches, it could be seen that boundary role person is crucial in every sector such as company, banking, and education sectors. However, there has been limited research conducted on library service personnel as boundary role persons, remembering that library nowadays serves as vital sources and disseminators of information.

Library plays a crucial role in providing information, integral to the quality of education. It functions as the centers for storing and preserving knowledge, as well as learning, education, and information dissemination centers. Regarding to this prominent role of library, librarians should have an advance skill to serve library users and beyond community of the library, work in various capacities such as reference services, circulation services, general services, children's services, storytelling services, and others directly related to library users. This is considered important because work in the service department is closely tied to the public society, requiring those on the front line to establish both external and internal relationships and must be able to bridge the desires of library users (Santoso, 2012).

Library services involve providing necessary information and facilities to users optimally, serving as a bridge for the library's success. This is because the service is in direct contact with the external community who will provide assessments either directly or indirectly, (Luthfiyah,

2015).The quality of services provided by librarians can be accessed through several components such as reliability, responsiveness, competence, communication, credibility, and tangibility, as identified by Parasuraman (2015). Rambat (2013) also revealed a similar statement, listing various indicators to measure the qualities of librarian service such as reliability, responsiveness, competence, and empathy for service librarians. The concept of librarian performance refers to the level of achievement and results demonstrated through the implementation of assigned work based on specific standards and measures.

Research Method

This is a qualitative research with descriptive approach. The descriptive approach is used to objectively portray the conditions of the field or a situation. The subject of this research is library users from three universities in West Sumatera particularly UIN Imam Bonjol Library, Unversitas Negeri Padang Library, and Bung Hatta University Library. Furthermore, this research used accidental sampling technique to determine the research sample. Additionally, questionnaire also used as the main instrument to collect the number of research data. From 100 distributed questionnaires, 99 were returned. After collecting the data, it processed and analyzed using a likert scale, ranging from one to five with answers from very dissatisfied to very satisfied.

Results and Discussion

Six variables that used to assess the performance of librarians who serve as boundary role persons in the university's library are 1) the ability to work under pressure, 2) work integrity and work commitment, 3) ability to work independently, 4) quick learning in dealing with changes, 5) persuasive communication, and 6) adaptability to technology. Based on the distributed questionnaire, the following responses were obtained:

Initially, in terms of librarians' ability to work under pressure, reflected in their attitude and timeliness in providing services to library users, 1.98% of respondents were very dissatisfied, 3.96% were dissatisfied, 86.13% were satisfied, and 5.94% were very satisfied. It can be

concluded that librarians, as boundary role persons, can effectively handle pressure, with 86.13% expressing satisfaction.

Secondly, the work integrity and high work commitment of librarians which represented by the time allocated by librarians to listen to and meet the needs of library users, the results obtained that around 4.95% of respondents were very dissatisfied, 2.97% of respondents were dissatisfied, 79.2% of respondents expressed their satisfied and approximately 10.89% of respondents expressed very satisfied. Refers to the result, it can be said that librarians have work integrity and high work commitment in terms of the time given to library users with the highest score being 79.2%. However, there are still 4.95% of library users who feel very dissatisfied. Even though this percentage is relatively small, it should pay attention to most librarians in the universities of West Sumatera to be increase their work integrity and commitment while serving library users.

Additionally, in the terms of librarians' ability to work independently, determined by several indicators where librarians are able to serve and meet the needs of library users without involving other colleagues. The results revealed that 7.92% of respondents were very dissatisfied with the librarians, 16.83% were dissatisfied, 72.27% were expressed their satisfied and only 0.99% of respondents who were very satisfied. With the small number of respondents who were very satisfied, this means that some librarians are still unable to work independently.

Fourthly, in terms of librarians' capability to quickly learn and understand various changes, which were reflected by speed of response, and handling several information that could not be found by library users, showed that 5.94% of the users were very dissatisfied with librarians' performance. Meanwhile, there were approximately73.26% of users who expressed their satisfaction, and only 12,87% of users who were very satisfied with librarians ability in quickly learn and understands changes. These results illustrate that librarians in the universities can learn quickly to understand changes seen from unexpected situations such as the response given to library users when they could not find such information as per their desire.

Furthermore, the librarians as boundary role persons must have high levels of persuasive communication. This variable is viewed from several indicators of the librarian's attitude to provide solutions and explanations for the information needs. The results reported that there were 4.95% of users who were very dissatisfied with librarians' performance, particularly the communication skill when explaining information. Then,there were also 12.87% of respondents said they were dissatisfied with librarian communication, 59.4% of respondents were very satisfied, and 20.79% of respondents answered very satisfied with the communication provided by the librarian. This can be an illustration for librarians, that there are still many respondents who say they are satisfied with the communication provided by librarians, but there are still numbers giving scores of dissatisfied and very dissatisfied which could be a factor for improving communication for librarians in the future.

Lastly, for the librarians' ability regarding to mastery of technology, which is measured by their proficiency in using engines and addressing related issues, indicated that 10.89% of respondents answered very dissatisfied, and 50.49% of respondents answered dissatisfied. Meanwhile, the satisfied answer rates were 27.72% and only about 8.91% users who expressed very satisfied. This suggests that librarians, as boundary role persons, may not be fully prepared in mastering technology, with over half of the respondents expressing dissatisfaction with technology-related services.

Based on the description, the results of descriptive statistics on the readiness of librarians as boundary role persons in libraries can be seen bellow:

Table. 1

Descriptive Statistics Performance of Boundary Role Persons

No	Variable	Rank			
		1	2	3	4
1.	The ability to work under pressure	1.98	3.96	86.13	5.94
2.	Work integrity an work commitment	4.95	2.97	79.2	10.89
3.	Ability to work independently	7.92	16.83	72.27	0.99
4.	Quick learning in dealing with changes	5.94	5.94	73.26	12.87

5.	Persuasive Communication	4.95	12.87	59.4	20.79
6.	Adaptability to technology	10.89	50.49	27.72	8.91

Overall, refers to the remarked result it is evident that only 10.06% of respondents were very satisfied with the services provided by librarians, while 66.33% expressed general satisfaction. Despite the majority expressing satisfaction, there are still several improvements that must be made by librarians so that there are no more respondents who give answers that are very dissatisfied with the services provided by librarians to library users.

Graphic 1.

User's Satisfaction on Boundary Role Persons Performance
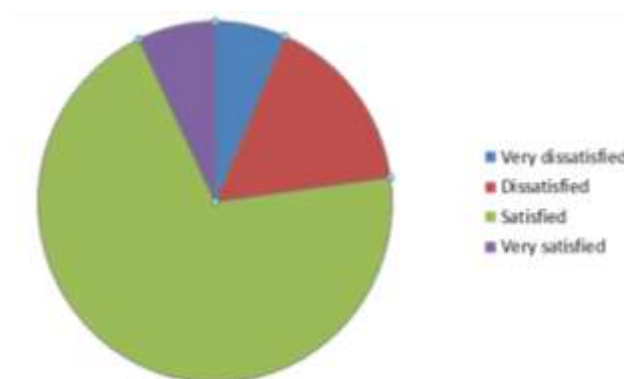
Conclusion

Based on the aforementioned findings, it can be concluded that librarians occupying boundary roles, particularly those in the service department, play a pivotal role in shaping the library's image, especially among its users. The questionnaire distributed to library users revealed that the variable concerning on librarians' proficiency in technology did not receive a favorable response. More than 50% of library users expressed dissatisfaction with this aspect of the service, suggesting that librarians may be perceived as less adept at quickly mastering technology. However, for other variables, librarians received relatively high scores, indicating a higher level of satisfaction among library users, particularly in terms of communication when providing services.

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