Abstract

Library is a growing organization. It played important roles and has its own impact to the society. As an information provider, the roles of librarian are constantly changing due to the rapid growth of the nation. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) hastily transformed the traditional library into a modern and sophisticated library. The demand by users is no longer about or only related to books. Librarian in one way or another need to become an agent of change in the society, therefore the roles of librarian need to be revamped and aligned with the needs of the society and technology.

This paper will discuss the significant challenges and opportunities in creating a new age librarian which embedding technology in delivering the services in order to meet the information needs of the library user. The role of embedded librarian in the academic library is discussed. The changing needs and demands by the users require the changing roles of librarian. The process is challenging and demanding, but it needs to be done.

Keywords: Embedded librarian, academic library, challenges, opportunities

INTRODUCTION

The evolving of information technology does give impact to any organizations. Technology played its role in order to engage the organizations with people and society including the usage of hardware, software and mobile applications. Thus, library has become an essential/integral part of the technology in the process of searching and retrieving of information. Moreover, the role of librarian is constantly changing from time to time in order to serve the best for the users and organizations. The term of embedded librarian is not new in the world of librarianship. It’s already been discussed a decade ago, and continuously discuss until now. Actually, the origin of the discussion on embedded librarian begun in 1970s. What is embedded librarianship? According to Shumaker (2014), this concept is the mixture of 5 key components; strong working relationship; understanding and volunteering between
Seminar Kepustakawanan
Memperkasakan Perpustakaan Melalui Inisiatif Berasaskan Keberhasilan

librarian and users; shared the same goals between both parties; customized high-value contribution of librarian towards the users and organizations; and team membership In the 2009 “Models of Embedded Librarianship Final Report”, “Embedded Librarianship” is defined as encompassing “the work of librarians in a research institute or corporation whose offices are moved from a central library to their customer groups, so that they can work more closely with the members of those groups. It includes the role of a medical librarian who goes on “rounds” and participates in clinical care teams.” (Shumaker & Talley, 2009). For this circumstance, the roles of librarian will be changing and a new age librarian will be created.

DEFINITION OF EMBEDDED LIBRARIAN

Shumaker and Talley (2009) defined embedded librarian as a librarian focused “on the needs of one or more specific groups, building relationships with these groups, developing a deep understanding of their work, and providing information services that are highly customized and targeted to their greatest needs”. Embedding is the way to get engage between librarian and users in gaining the understanding of the information needs. Besides, according to Dene (2011) the embedded librarian is an integral part to the whole of the embedding process. Moreover, embedded librarian needs to move out from libraries in order to create the new model of library work. In order to create the strong working relationships between a group of researchers, students and administrators, the embedded librarian needs knowledge and skills in information retrieval and understand the faculty or team that he or she will work with. Moreover, it takes the librarian moves out from the norm traditional librarian to the “on-site” librarian in order to get and work closely and build the strong relationships among researchers, lecturers, undergraduates, postgraduates and administrators (Carlson & Kneale, 2011).

The concept of embedded librarian has already been implemented and been practiced in a pharmaceutical company, a bank, and a consultancy (Fuhles-Ubach, 2013). On that time, as medical librarian had to follow the medical teams in order to serve and support them with latest and update information on the cases of patients. Moreover, the University of Rhode Island and the Community College of Vermont had joined the librarians and users in teaching for information literacy class and doing a research, and as a result there are having stronger relationships and connections with students (Carlson & Kneale, 2011). Thus, the embedded librarian is important in order to support the roles of librarian not only in library organization but out of the library organization. In other word, as a librarian the task and job is not only focus on the users’ request in the library, but more to embedding themselves to a particular team, research team and others in a group.

DISTINGUISHES BETWEEN TRADITIONAL LIBRARIAN AND EMBEDDED LIBRARIAN

Today’s library environment has changed due to the usage and demand on
digital information. Moreover, the users can access the information anywhere and anytime via online. If the users do come to the library, it is not a matter of asking the questions anymore but more enjoying the facilities provided by the library, for instance the environment of quiet place to study, discussion in the group, and using the computers or free access to the Internet. Thus, there are several key characteristics that distinguish between traditional librarian and embedded librarian (Shumaker, 2012);

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional librarian</th>
<th>Embedded librarian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responsive</td>
<td>Anticipatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual customer</td>
<td>Team of collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standardized</td>
<td>Customized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single transactions</td>
<td>Ongoing projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>Partnership</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Characteristics of traditional and embedded librarian

Table 1 shows that the key characteristics of the traditional and embedded librarian. The embedded librarian is more anticipative and active in the group and does not wait to be asked by users while traditional librarian only responsive towards questions asked by the users. This shows that the librarian is waiting for the users to ask them. Embedded librarian collaborate in a team in order to gain the understanding among the group’s members but traditional librarian is more to the individual customer who needs the attention by face-to-face communication. In term of standardization, the traditional librarian is more concern on the policy, rules and regulations rather than the time spend to discuss the information need of the user, and hence more or less the librarian should be at the reference desk. In this context, the embedded librarian is more customized, while the users in a team or group can discuss with the librarian anywhere and anytime. The traditional librarian is more focused on single transaction based on the requests by users and the availability of the users to seek for help and assistance by the librarian. While, embedded librarian is more to ongoing projects whereby the users need to get along with the librarian regardless if the users in a research team or medical team, and consultancy team or in a group in order to seek for assistance in searching and retrieving the latest and update information and knowledge. Besides, traditional librarian is more to serving the services to the users as requested. The role of embedded librarian is more to partnership. According to Shumaker (2012) embedded librarianship model is the way to strengthen the relationships, gains the mutual understanding between both parties, and shared the same goals in achieving the organizational objectives. Thus, embedded librarian needs to be a partner of the team, in order to gain a mutual understanding between both parties.

As embedded librarian is more prone to be instructor or educator in teaching and learning the online courses, it shows that the librarians go beyond their job duties to serve the users and organizations. Furthermore, the embedded librarian builds
relationship with family, student, R&D team or any other groups. Thus, interaction within the entire community of information users to ensure information flow to everyone in the group who needs the information is achieved. Besides, relationship and understanding of work are prerequisites that enable librarians to customize contributions to the team’s work and provide sophisticated, highly valued information management and information services.

ROLES OF EMBEDDED ACADEMIC LIBRARIAN

Kesselman and Watstein (2009) identified two major roles which can be applied in an academic institution, the course-integrated instruction and membership in research teams. The course-integration instruction is already applied in some universities and colleges. This is in regard to online courses such as information skill class and information literacy class that need participation among users especially students, undergraduates, or postgraduates. In this case, the embedded librarian needs to instruct the users on specific content and assignments in the course. As information skill class has been implemented in a one shot program at a very beginning of the semester intake and the rest is focus on how to use the online databases class. A survey had been conducted and the result is the students positively improving the scores when there is an embedded librarian.

The other role of embedded librarian is membership in research teams. It is essential that he or she be part of the team. For example, the case of clinical medical librarian in health sciences where the librarian needs to go round with the medical teams and gives the immediate and quick action on the information request by the team. Besides, the teamwork and collaborations among librarians, faculty, students and administrators is indispensable.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Opportunities
In implementing the concept of embedded librarianship, there are some opportunities that library organization will look forward in order to increase the usage of services, facilities and collections of the library. There are;

Creating positive image of library
Users Nowadays perceive library as a quiet place for study, discussion in a group, using the ICT facilities and enjoying the library environment. However in order to search for information, users prefer using internet in searching the information regardless if the information is true or false rather than referring to librarian. In addition, the consistency of the librarian in assisting the users anytime when they are needed will portray the positive and good image of the library organization. “Google can bring you back 100,000 answers, a librarian can bring you back the right one.” (Gaiman, 1960-)
**Increasing IT usage among the users**

There is no doubt in today’s era that IT plays the vital role in finding the information throughout the entire world. Thus the usage of IT among the library users will increase from time to time due to the embedding the technology in searching for the information. Furthermore the users will know how to find and search the information by using the IT applications, including hardware and software. In addition, the librarian will guide the users on how to use the IT effectively.

**Full utilization of library services, facilities and collections**

A huge amount of collections, variety of services and facilities will be wasted if there is no intention to optimize the utilization of library. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the embedded librarian to ensure full utilization of the services provided by means of actively involved in the promotion of the services and products of the library by various channels primarily the electronic medium including social media.

**Creating the bonding time**

While having the strong working relationships between librarian and faculty’s members, the bonding time among each other will be increased. Bonding time is needed in creating further discussion on how to interact with other parties, example assisting the faculty in reviewing the curriculum in the future. In addition, the bonding time needs the trust of each other. The embedded librarian and faculty members and vice-versa will know everything about each other because of the trustworthy (Drewes & Hoffman, 2010).

**Encouraging the involvement of students and teams**

The involvement of students in any programs and activities is challenging process. Normally, a library organization held the program of literacy class or information skill class in one-shot instruction or a series of workshop on how to use the online databases in order to ensure the students understand the process of searching information physically and/or virtually. In virtually, the embedded librarian will creates a forum or discussion group consisting of research skills tips in order to assist a distance education student. A survey had been conducted and the result is the students positively improving the scores when there is an embedded librarian; who shares the knowledge and expertise of the information searching.

**Developing a strong morale and teamwork**

Teamwork is very essential to develop a strong morale among librarians, researchers, students and administrators. Teamwork needs cooperation, collaboration, and understanding in order to achieve the team’s goals. In the other word, in order to build or develop a strong morale and teamwork, the embedded librarian and other parties have to working together, sharing the information and knowledge expert among
themselves. Thus, it leads to the successful embedding process for both parties.

**Enhancing the skills**
A unique set of skills bring benefits to any individual who has it. The concept of embedded librarianship, open up the opportunities to have those skills for both parties to be more effective and efficient. Example, the clinical medical librarian who is working together with the physician teams in order to serve and provide the teams with relevant medical literature in an immediate action as an information provider. However, the other skills such as communication, leadership, and negotiation will be improved from time to time.

**CHALLENGES**
There are some challenges faced by the library organization when applying the concept of embedded librarianship. There are;

*Library capability*
If there is a possibility to create the position of embedded librarian, the organization should know if their organization is capable in handling the staff expansion. Also, the organization should have the succession planning if they want to apply this concept of embedded librarianship. In employing the embedded librarian in an organization, the management should concern on the constraints of staff, time and budget (Riccio, 2012).

*Time management*
As time is important, the availability of the embedded librarian should be considered. As embedded librarian, he or she will perform the task of guiding the users in doing a research and get involve with the faculty’s member. The embedded librarian will be acquainted with the students of the faculty to get them realize and acknowledge the roles of embedded librarian. Thus, the librarian needs to manage their time effectively in order to cater the faculty which is attached to him or her. In other case by Knapp, Rowland and Charles (2014), librarians who is spending their time with the faculty members should concern on the time spend such as the commitment of the librarian to be available all the time, when it is needed. This is due to the faculty which is not clearly understood on the times of librarian or vice-versa.

*Willingness or readiness of the librarian*
The readiness or willingness of the librarian to be an embedded librarian is a challenge or issue for librarians. Does anyone ready to get involved with the faculty’s curriculum, assist the students in research from a scratch? If the answer is yes, it will bring the opportunities to both parties. If the answer is no, probably it is hard for library organization to make a decision in getting the understanding among the faculty’s members and a team or group of people. As noted by Shumaker (2012), when the library organization needs to implement the embedded librarian, the readiness of the staff and organization should be assessed.
Availability of social media
Frequently used social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and blogs will bring impact to the society and the librarian in getting the attention from people on the availability of library services, facilities and collections. There are different approaches employed by embedded librarian in getting along with the users and organizations. Drewes and Hoffman (2010) relate the usage of Web 2.0 communication applications that brings the effective way of delivering information such as tutorials, interactive guides and links, and chat functions.

Resource allocation
In allocating the resources while the library organization plan to create a position of embedded librarian, the library management and supervision should play their roles and responsibility if they want to make it successfully implemented. According to Shumaker (2014) there are ways to allocate the resources; it is all depends on the library management on how to get a budget and funds in gaining more resources.

Workload balancing and burnout
According to Shumaker (2014) based on his experience, there is a situation where a successful embedded librarian overwhelmed with the workload of a team, until avoiding eye contact with a team. This is an unhealthy sign for him in order to develop an embedded librarianship program. The roles of embedded librarian are differing than traditional librarian. Embedded librarianship embraces with 5 key factors; relationships; mutual understanding; shared goals; customized high-value contributions; and team memberships. Thus, it is important to understand deeply on each other job and responsibility.

Team participation
Is there any faculty member willingly and available to participate and join the embedded librarianship program? It is hard to get participation from individual, people and society. Thus, embedded librarian needs to actively participate in any meetings, programs, or projects that lead to the positive outcome and gain benefits from both parties. Kesselman & Watstein (2009) notes the librarian needs to be available anytime, anywhere even if in office, home, laboratory and mobile devices.

CONCLUSION
As a conclusion, embedded academic librarian is worth to be adapted and applied in the library organization in order to strengthen the relationships among faculty’s member, students, community and the librarian. This includes engaging the available services provided by the library to the users in order for them to use and
apply in their daily life. In creating the new age librarian, the embedded librarian plays indispensable roles not only to the librarians themselves but also the researchers and administrators. There is no right or wrong to implement the concept of embedded librarian. It depends on the library organization, the readiness and willingness of the staff and the capability in handling the library and its users. However, the relationships built in between the librarian and the users will work if they agree in the same shared goals. Thus, embedded librarianship will create opportunities and/or challenges for some organizations. In other words, it is more to the readiness of the staff and the organization in facing this situation.

REFERENCES


