

Original Article

Library as Mental Health Center of Bangka Belitung Islands Province

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Abstract:

Mental health is an important part for every individual. Individuals maintain and maintain mental health by implementing a healthy lifestyle. Mental health is an issue that has received global attention because of its significant impact on the quality of life of individuals in the social environment. Mental health encompasses the psychological, emotional, and social aspects of an individual, becoming an important focus in the library environment. Libraries are starting to show their potential as effective and inclusive mental health centers in the Bangka Belitung Islands Provincial Library. In this research, the library has the function of accessing information, health facilities (calm atmosphere), as well as child-friendly programs that support social inclusion. This research aims to explore the role of libraries as social resources that can be widely accessed and the role of librarians as informants and facilitators in providing a supportive environment for visitors, in line with child-friendly social inclusion on mental health with a focus on psychological perspectives, as well as analyzing the implementation of friendly programs children to increase social inclusion. Implementation of child-friendly principles in libraries aims to create an inclusive environment, a comfortable, creative and educational space for children (individuals) to learn, interact and achieve mental well-being. The research method uses in-depth interviews with librarians and users as the main informants, as well as content analysis of existing programs. Research findings show that libraries can create an environment that supports mental health by providing access to information resources, space for reflection and self-exploration, and positive social interactions. Child-friendly programs, such as book discussion groups, expressive arts workshops, and counseling sessions, are consistently identified as effective means of promoting social inclusion and supporting mental well-being. The implication of this research is the importance of collaboration between librarians, psychologists and other stakeholders in designing and implementing programs that strengthen the role of libraries as mental health centers in society.



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Keywords: Mental Health, Library, Librarian, User, and Psychology

Introduction

Mental health is an important part of human life. Mental health is very closely

related to an individual's daily activities. Mental health is a condition of a person who is protected from mental disorders or neurosis and mental illness. Adapting oneself to other people and society can be done in various places, having the ability to control when facing problems, and creating harmony and harmony within oneself. [\(Sarwono, 2011\)](#). Mental health according to the American Psychological Association (APA) is as a state in which there is an absence of dysfunction in psychological, emotional, behavioral, and social spheres. In reality, in society there are more and more mental illnesses such as depression, anxiety and stress that affect individuals in daily life in society [\(Bikriyah, 2020\)](#).

The situation of reduced adjustment in individuals results in mental health decreasing and occurs in society and has a serious impact on the quality of life of individuals such as reduced productivity, social relationships, and even leads to physical health problems [\(Ali, 2020\)](#). This also requires an increasing prevalence with collaborative efforts in overcoming mental health problems [\(Susilawati, 2018\)](#). Another social cause of poor mental health lies in a life that is continually rooted in current conditions, for example people living in poverty, unstable environments, crime rates, poor housing environments and broken families tend to have high levels of psychological distress. high [\(Ross, 1985\)](#). Other long-lasting stressful circumstances are a troubled marriage, oppressive work conditions, or pressure from parents. The sociological perspective predicts that life conditions, roles, and relationships are associated with low levels of psychological well-being and outweigh the qualities of the particular individual who has to face these situations.

A library is a building container used to store books or published information which is usually stored according to a certain arrangement for use by readers. In terms of books and other publications, this includes all printed materials, books, magazines, reports, pamphlets, proceedings, manuscripts, book sheets, musical works, audio-visual media works such as films, cassettes, vinyl records, micro forms such as micro films, microopaque. Webster (in Sulisty, B., 1993) states that a library is a collection of books, manuscripts and library materials which are usually used for learning, comfort or pleasure in reading. The library can also be interpreted as a place that is now increasingly needed by various parties, from children to adults, to calm themselves, increase their knowledge and expand their social relations. Apart from that, the library has also become a place that provides various services as well as a forum for conducting library accreditation workshops for each school in Bangka Belitung, socialization from schools regarding character development and knowledge for students, and child-friendly programs for all school levels who attend. to libraries such as special school, elementary school, middle school and high school levels. Blind aids (braille), writing aids (brailtex), deaf aids (in the ear) also exist, as well as plastic ball rides, children's hula hoops, slides and children's swings which are supported by the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection [\(Chayono, Arie et al., 2022\)](#).

Libraries as a source of information on various sciences. The functioning of libraries has a positive impact on the state and nation, namely increasing the quality of intelligence of each individual which is useful in developing a nation and state with character. Apart from that, to reach all levels of society regarding the implementation of library services, it is necessary to establish an institution that handles libraries nationally. The national library was formed based on government regulations. The library is tasked with assisting the President in organizing education and development in the context of preserving library materials as a result of the nation's culture of science,

technology and culture ([Purwono and S. Suharmini, 2009](#)). Libraries are knowledge centers and information sources that have great potential to play a role in improving people's mental health, although the role of libraries in mental health is still in the process of optimization, where research that reviews in depth about libraries being mental health centers is still limited. ([Afdi, 2018](#)).

Previous studies looked at the role of libraries in supporting the importance of mental health in society. Apart from that, this still requires further research to understand more deeply the impact of programs organized by libraries on individual psychological well-being. This also shows the importance of information related to factors that support libraries as mental health centers, such as staff training, librarians, collaboration with mental health professionals, as well as program accessibility which still needs to be explored in more depth. The research is expected to contribute to meaningful insights for libraries, mental health interests, and the public regarding the potential of libraries as strong partners in efforts to maintain and improve mental health. Understanding the role of libraries in mental health, we will be better served by integrating libraries into broader mental health initiatives and supporting individuals in achieving psychological well-being. ([Novian & Jumino, 2020](#)).

Research related to this topic has been carried out by many previous scholars, such as research that discusses the influence and impact of the use of interiors in libraries on user psychology ([Majidah et al., 2019](#)). Research conducted by Nanda Maya (2020) on "Adult literacy and mental health in Bandung". Apart from that, Kartikasari (2019) also conducted research discussing "the relationship between mental health and adult literature". Further research was conducted by Nurul Aziza (2023) entitled "Mental health impacts resulting from library services". This shows that libraries as mental health centers in Bangka Belitung Province have not been found or specifically researched. Therefore, the author is very interested in studying libraries which will become a forum for people's mental health.

Methods

This research uses a mixed approach which combines quantitative and qualitative methods. The approach states a comprehensive understanding of the role of libraries as mental health centers and the impact of their programs on individual psychological well-being. In collecting quantitative data, the author conducted a survey technique to measure the perceptions and experiences of library visitors related to psychological well-being programs. The survey contains questions about levels of satisfaction, changes in psychological well-being, and effectiveness of implemented programs. The author collected descriptive qualitative data using in-depth interview techniques and observations from staff, librarians and users. The author also analyzed the data using descriptive analysis. The research results will be analyzed comprehensively and presented in a research report that includes key findings, practical implications, and recommendations for library and mental health stakeholders.

Results

The Role of Libraries in Improving Mental Health

Libraries are essentially learning resource centers and information sources for their readers or users. The library is a gathering place for books that have been arranged as a means of learning. The library is also defined as a place that is now increasingly needed by various parties from children to adults to calm themselves, increase knowledge

(literacy and numeracy), and expand socialization relations. Apart from that, the library has also become a place that provides various services as well as a forum for conducting library accreditation workshops for each school in Bangka Belitung, socialization from schools regarding character development and knowledge for students, and child-friendly programs for all school levels who attend. to libraries such as special school, elementary school, middle school and high school levels. Blind aids (braille), writing aids (brailtex), deaf aids (in the ear) are also available, as well as plastic ball games, children's hula hoops, slides and children's swings.

Eskha (2018) states that libraries are useful for helping people increase their knowledge by providing opportunities and encouragement through library services and have meaning as answers to various scientific questions, where the library functions as a place to search for information to fulfill the user's curiosity. One of the roles of libraries is to improve health and psychological stability in everyday life. The level of boredom (stress) or poor mental health arises because of the various pressures and burdens of life experienced by each individual. The role of libraries can also help people when they get through tired and boring days due to the burdens and pressures of life that have lasted for years. Libraries allow users to explore by carrying out various activities in the library while still providing comfort, thereby reducing the psychological burden in their lives. Libraries have a role in helping their users study even when they are sick and stressed. The library can be used as a calm place to study and relieve boredom/stress due to busy routine activities so that individuals can feel a little relief from the psychological burden they are feeling at that time ([Persia & Rohmiyati, 2013](#)).

Libraries provide access to a wide variety of books, magazines, articles, and other resources that can help individuals understand, overcome, or manage mental health problems. This includes books on psychology, self-help, motivational books, and more. ([Sugianto, 2020](#)). Additionally, many libraries host programs and services that focus on mental health. This could include support groups, meditation workshops, conversation sessions, or meetings with a counselor or mental health professional. All of this can help individuals feel supported and get the help they need. ([Fajry, 2022](#)). This is also supported by the fact that libraries provide a calm and comfortable environment where individuals can read, reflect, or just relax, a good place to calm themselves from the busy daily routine (saturation/stress) in order to create time for themselves. ([Zuraida, 2023](#)).

Libraries host creative activities such as art, writing, or music groups. These activities can help individuals express themselves, reduce boredom or stress, and improve mental well-being. Apart from that, by holding educational events or campaigns about mental health, libraries can help reduce the stigma that is still attached to mental health problems ([Gandhawagi, 2021](#)). This can make people feel more comfortable seeking help if they need it. Libraries can also be a valuable source of information for mental health professionals, nurses, such as psychologists and therapists who want to stay up-to-date with the latest developments in their field (Perpustakaan, 2022).

Community Numeracy Literacy will also increase because each individual can gain better knowledge and understanding about mental health. Libraries can provide the resources and information needed to help readers understand how to prevent mental disorders and improve their mental health (Komariah et al., 2022). Therefore, it can be said that the functioning of the library has become more meaningful, because of the various programs it has, such as the provision or service of books, access to information, services that support mental health in order to increase the awareness and mental well-being of each individual.

Library Efforts to Facilitate Mental Health

Libraries have great potential to facilitate efforts to improve people's psychological well-being. Here are some ways in which libraries can play a role in this. First, there is access to information resources. Libraries provide access to a wide range of information resources relevant to psychological well-being, including books, articles, journals and brochures. This can also support the community to understand mental health issues and find solutions to related problems. Second, Education and Awareness Program. Libraries can organize education and awareness programs about mental health, such as workshops, seminars, or lectures delivered by mental health professionals. This can also contribute to increasing public understanding of the importance of mental health (Komariah, et al., 2022).

Third, support groups and discussions. Hosting support groups or chat sessions about mental health is another way libraries can help. It gives people a place to talk about their experiences, listen to others, and feel supported. Fourth, there is the provision of therapeutic reading materials. Libraries can provide a collection of therapeutic reading materials that include self-help books, motivational books, and novels related to mental health themes. These books can provide motivational, emotional, and inspirational support.

Fifth, space for meditation and calm. Some libraries have special rooms for meditation or meditating. It is a quiet place where people can reflect, meditate or simply feel at peace.

Sixth, digital resources. Modern libraries also offer access to digital resources such as audiobooks, e-books, and mental health applications that can assist individuals in improving psychological well-being (Perpustakaan, 2022).

Seventh, there is collaboration with mental health professionals. Libraries can collaborate with mental health professionals such as psychology or therapists to provide counseling or brief consultation services in the library. This provides easier access for people to get professional help.

Eighth, holding workshops and seminars that educate the public about mental health, libraries can also play a role in reducing the stigma that is still attached to mental health problems (Ali, 2020). Based on the above, it can be said that libraries can be centers that support people's psychological well-being, increase understanding of mental health issues, facilitate human resources and services needed to help individuals feel better psychologically.

Obstacles Faced by Libraries as Mental Health Centers

Libraries as mental health centers may face several obstacles in carrying out their role. Some of the obstacles that libraries often face in this function are as follows:

- a. Resource limitations: Libraries face budget, personnel, and infrastructure limitations to improve mental health services which require the allocation of additional resources, including staff training, resource acquisition, and development of programs in the library such as child-friendly.
- b. Staff Training: Library staff may not have specific training in mental health. They may require additional training to understand and respond to the needs of visitors facing mental health problems (Nurul Aziza, 2023).
- c. Stigma towards mental health: There is a social stigma towards mental health

- problems, including visitors may be reluctant to seek help or participate in programs related to mental health for fear of being shunned or identified ([Kemensetneg, 2023](#)).
- d. Accessibility and Affordability: All individuals do not have equal access to libraries, especially those who live in remote areas or have limited mobility. Libraries need to think about ways to increase the accessibility of mental health programs such as being child friendly.
 - e. Lack of collaboration: Collaboration with mental health professionals can enrich mental health programs in libraries. However, a lack of collaboration between libraries and mental health service providers can be an obstacle.
 - f. Evaluation of program impact: Accurately measuring the impact of mental health programs and understanding the changes experienced by visitors can be a difficult and expensive task ([Inriati, 2020](#)).
 - g. Policies and regulations: Libraries may need to address the various rules and regulations governing the delivery of mental health programs, including data privacy and security.
 - h. Limited Knowledge: Libraries may face obstacles in providing up-to-date and accurate information about mental health, as well as regarding resources that can be used by visitors/users ([Sugianto, 2020](#)).

Table 1. Child-friendly equipment at the Bangka Belitung provincial library.



said that libraries still have obstacles in running them as mental health centers.

Efforts to overcome these obstacles can increase community access to better and more affordable mental health services. Collaboration with external partners and efforts to run mental health programs and increase awareness of the role of libraries in mental health will help minimize some of the obstacles that are still being experienced.

Conclusion

Libraries provide extensive access to a wide variety of reading materials, including books on mental health, self-help guides, and other sources of information. It assists individuals in seeking a better understanding of their mental health problems, as well as solutions to overcome the problems they are experiencing. Libraries provide a quiet environment for reading and studying. It can be an ideal place for individuals who want to escape the boredom/stress of everyday life and reflect or absorb their thoughts. Some libraries hold mental health programs such as discussion groups, workshops and experience sharing meetings. This provides an opportunity for individuals to interact with others who may be facing similar issues and support each other. Apart from that, the Bangka Belitung provincial library has also carried out library accreditation workshops for each school in the Bangka Belitung provincial library, outreach from schools regarding character development and knowledge for students, and child-friendly programs for all levels of school who come to the library such as special school, elementary school, middle school and high school levels.

Blind aids (braille), writing aids (brailtex), deaf aids (in the ear) are also available, as well as plastic ball games, children's hula hoops, slides and children's swings. This also has significant uses for every individual with a disability where properties such as blind aids (braille), writing aids (brailtex), deaf aids (in the ear), as well as plastic ball games, hula hoops are also supported by the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection. Libraries can play a role in helping reduce the stigma associated with mental health problems by providing various sources of information, comfortable and quiet spaces so that libraries can be said to be a forum that plays a role in helping create awareness about the importance of mental health in order to have better mental health. means to each individual.

The availability of books about mental health and self-help in the library can also help each individual to improve their understanding of themselves and coping skills (a method, an effort made by an individual to control, reduce, overcome or tolerate problems experienced or accepted such as demands (distress demands) in the form of physical or psychological pressure that can threaten or harm). This contributes to personal growth and the development of positive mental health. Librarians can help direct individuals to professional sources of support if needed. Therefore, it can be said that the library is not only a place to look for information, but can also play an important role in supporting an individual's overall mental health through access to various sources of knowledge, a calm environment, mental health programs, positive support, and the presence of child-friendly which is beneficial for individuals and society.

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