

# Information Seeking Behaviour in the Mualaf Communities of Al Falah Mosque in Surabaya

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**Abstract:** Everyone has an awareness of their spiritual needs as an impact of the existence of the soul within man. Spiritual needs can be obtained from various paths, and one of them is through religion. Some people study the Islamic religion and finally choose to embrace the religion of Islam as their life guidance in the process of meeting their needs of spirituality. The purpose of this study was to determine the behaviour of information seeking among Mualaf at Al Falah Mosque in Surabaya. This research used the approach of the Information Search Process theory. This theory explains the existence of initiation, selection, exploration, formulation, collection and presentation in every process of information seeking among Mualaf. The research method used was quantitative and descriptive with the number of respondents totalling 30 people who were mualaf at the Muhtadin Institution in Masjid Al Falah, Surabaya. The number of Mualaf in Indonesia in 2016 was 2,491 people. There was an increase in the number of Mualaf by around 5-6 percent in the previous year. The number is expected to continue to increase given the current and numerous studies about the religion of Islam. The number of Mualaf who made a pledge at Al Falah Mosque in Surabaya in 2017 was recorded at 161 people. The results of the research shows the involvement in each stage of the Information Search Process concerning information seeking behaviour among the Mualaf registered and active in the Muhtadin Institute of Masjid Al Falah. The conclusions of this study indicate that Mualaf in Surabaya begin information seeking from the urge to become a Muslim. Good Muslims then encourage Mualaf to search for information through information channels that are deemed appropriate to their information needs. Satisfaction after sharing the information with fellow Mualaf is the end result of the information seeking process. This process replaces anxiety and confusion with a sense of satisfaction at the beginning of the process of information seeking.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The road to pursuing a career in Library and Information science is not forthright and there is no straight direction in which to travel. Sometimes, people who pursue a career as librarians as their chosen profession experience some detours and experience another job in their life. It also rare to hear of university students who have been taught to become a librarian from the beginning (Lo, 2017: p.424). The librarian profession has not been in much demand and is often unpopular in the community, including school librarians. There are 37,133 school librarians in 365,000 school libraries in Indonesia and 1,700 principals. The profession of school librarians is duplicated by that of school

teachers. School librarians with a background of Library Science are few, and there are distinct advantages and disadvantages in this profession. Besides, there are overlaps in the rules to being a librarian, starting from recruitment, the career path, the public image and through to their welfare. Researchers are interested in knowing how the choice to become a school librarian is formed by people who pursue the profession of school librarians with such conditions in place.

The self-image of the librarian profession is lost to professions such as lecturers and teachers who are still in one particular area of education. This profession has been researched by Korneliza Pert concerning the professions as a source of income. The result is that librarians served in sixth position

out of seven professions that are in demand after doctors, teachers, constructors, economists and lawyers. The latter is occupied by system's engineers or programmers. The National Library of Indonesia and the librarian institution currently has 700 employees, including 178 functional librarians and with one third being "librarians in passing", i.e. functional librarians with no formal education background in library and information science, which involves ordinary people without any library education performing the duties of a librarian.

The career path of a school librarian is limited because of the potential of teachers to fill the position of the Head of the Library with the presence of Permendiknas Number 25 Year 2008. It is because of a lack of appreciation and low welfare. Endang Fitriyah Mannan's research on School Librarian Retention in Surabaya 2010 stated that the first salary received by school librarians is between 500 thousand and 1 million, and it can be even less than 500 thousand rupiah depending on the institution where the librarian works. This situation is happening to school librarians in Surabaya. A Bambang Prakoso Librarian in SMKN 10 said that his salary was still below the minimum wage for labour, at around 1 million rupiah. Mas Dwi, the librarian of SMKN 2 in Surabaya, confirmed that the salary he received after 5 years of work was two million rupiah.

This study has explained the rationale choice underlying the act of becoming a librarian and has sought to know whether it serves as a quick way to achieve the individual's life goals. Are they conscious in determining and choosing the librarian profession as an individual preference or is there something else involved? What is the impetus for an individual who sets their choice as becoming a school librarian? Is being a school librarian based on a strong inner drive and done solemnly by the individual, so then it will be directed and bring good results into their life?

This study examined the reasons for becoming a school librarian and how their rationality is formed among the conditions in society. Thus, this context can be formulated into two focus problems. The first is why they chose to pursue the profession of school librarian and the rationality of the librarian profession among school librarians in the city of Surabaya. The research was conducted qualitatively using the social behaviour method from the phenomenological perspective. This research focused on knowing the cause of rational choices among school librarians while the condition is still considered to be unbeneficial. From the field data

alone, it was found that the salaries and other awards received by school librarians are still below the standard. Therefore, the study proves how rational choices are formed to pursue the work of school librarian.

## 2 RESEARCH RESULTS

Initially they plunge in the world of school libraries for various reasons, which can be analysed from the informant information. There were no informants who said that they worked on the basis of compulsion due to economic pressure. The push and economic constraints factor was a driving factor for working as a school librarian, but not the primary and first driver of action.

From the results from the six informants, it was known that they claimed the profession of the school librarian which came from their desires through various motivations, such as being influenced by their educational background, the work in the library being considered lighter than their previous work experience because there was no pressure, feeling challenged by the management at the school library as well as comparing the work of the school librarian in their hometown with the city of Surabaya. Their desire was also derived from the profession of school librarian who, according to them, is an open door to providing education because by they can give children the correct information and education is very important. This is because "information literacy is a necessity for everyday life decisions and is considered to be essential to the point that it was endorsed by UNESCO's 'Information for all' programme as a basic human right... (Demasson et al., 2017: p.1).

Although there were informants who admitted to entering the world of libraries by chance, after experiencing the profession, they feel secure and have been working for more than six years. The awareness of careful consideration for those working in the school library by Coleman is described in his theory of norms. He argues that the norms are built and conserved by some who see the benefits of compliance within the norms and dangers posed by violations of the norms. School librarians, as the actor in school libraries, are automatically bound by regulations applied in their school. This is as well as the unity that the library within the organizational structure represents still not standing alone; librarians are encouraged to perform tasks in the field of administration as well. With a mature

consideration, finally a candidate plunges into the world of school libraries and becomes a librarian.

The actor has hopes and goals within their actions, in an effort to realise that their hopes and objectives can be achieved. They always undertake careful consideration by prioritising the benefit maximisation involved so then the actor receives benefits from every action that he or she undertakes. Differences in the hopes and goals are there but they have something in common in that their interests can be achieved by doing the actions of a school librarian. In this context, the choice to become a librarian school is to obtain a tool that is then used as a follow-up to the goal of becoming a teacher, because by becoming a school librarian, the actor could receive more compensation regarding the income of a teacher.

Another informant revealed that he wants to become a lecturer and then with the knowledge gained in the field of libraries, he could then take further action to get compensation and use it to finance himself to become a lecturer. There are also those who make the school librarian profession their goal, because of the easy recruitment process, the job demands not being as heavy as their previous job, as well as flexible work.

### 3 CONCLUSIONS

Webber's theory of rational choice states that the ratio of one's personality is derived from two key factors, namely the tools and the actors to achieve the maximum benefit that underlies an action. In pursuing the profession of school librarian as a rational act, it cannot be separated from the objective educational environment of the actor who is equipped with a set of tools. However, it can occur by looking at the opportunities and actions that can be accepted and done as a rational effort. What is the behaviour of the school librarian's election and how does his / her rationality decide to prompt them to work as a school librarian? Why do they persist with their profession, in the midst of the problems that librarians are plagued by? Based on the results of research into the rational choice of school librarian professions, the research formula is summarised as follows.

In the beginning of their behaviour, their choice comes from consciously thinking of pursuing the profession of school librarian by considering the tools that they have, and then moving on to the external factors by looking at maximising the benefits that they can gain from the profession of

school librarian. The action is based only on the opportunities that are open and likely to be accepted due to an action. The process of thinking afterwards just weighs on the maximum beneficial aspect that will be obtained by the rational actors. This thinking process involves consideration if the actor tries to perform actions that are inconsistent with the tools that he possesses and what impacts it has on him. In the end, we can see the advantages of the chosen profession of librarian being an answer to the necessities of life.

The advantages gained by the actors who have the tools in accordance with larger libraries are found to be in comparison with the actors who do not have the tools. The actors with tool discrepancies require time to adapt to the work in the library. The opportunity to develop their knowledge of library science is also wide open for actors with the appropriate tools, with the development of the actor increasingly allowing them to be able to multiply their tools, with the implication of obtaining maximum benefits.

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