Towards a more inclusive library: Applying the four pillars of service inclusion in the Tolitoli regency library and archives service transformation

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Abstract: This research examines service inclusion in the transformation of the Tolitoli Regency Public Library in Indonesia through the lens of the Four Pillars of Service Inclusion: Enabling Opportunities, Offering Choice, Relieving Suffering, and Fostering Happiness. Employing a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through observations, in-depth interviews with 20 participants, and document analysis. The findings reveal the library's commitment to creating an inclusive environment by providing equal access, embracing digital services, offering diverse facilities and programs, collaborating with communities, and addressing potential biases. However, challenges persist in enhancing access for vulnerable groups, maximizing the potential of digital services, expanding collaborations, improving infrastructure and comfort, and securing adequate funding. The study recommends providing specialized resources, engaging with disability organizations, investing in targeted outreach and digital infrastructure, expanding collaborations, improving facilities, developing staff training programs, refining satisfaction measurement systems, and advocating for funding by demonstrating the impact on community well-being. The research contributes to the understanding of service inclusion in public libraries and offers practical insights for library managers and policymakers in designing inclusive library services that promote social equity and empowerment.

Keywords: Community Engagement, Digital Inclusion, Public Libraries, Service Inclusion, Social Inclusion.

1. Introduction

The concept of service inclusion has emerged as a critical aspect of the Transformative Service Research (TSR) paradigm, which focuses on improving consumer and societal well-being through service design and delivery [1]. Service inclusion refers to an egalitarian system that provides customers (consumers, clients, citizens, patients, and guests) with fair access to services, fair treatment during service, and fair opportunity to exit the service. It stems from the broader concept of social inclusion, which encompasses various dimensions aimed at fostering a sense of belonging, active citizenship, and participation in the social, economic, and cultural aspects of community life [2].

In Indonesia, efforts to apply inclusion have encompassed several sectors, including education, finance, and services. In the context of libraries, the application of social inclusion has become an important focus in the transformation of library services. Inclusive library services aim to reach all levels of society, including those who are marginalized, by providing accessible and beneficial services to the community [3]. The transformation of library services in Indonesia is marked by the "Library Transformation Based on Social Inclusion" program, which has been in place since 2018. This program is a national priority supported by the National Development Planning Agency (Bappenas) of the Republic of Indonesia.

The Tolitoli Regency in Indonesia has become one of the partners in implementing the library transformation program based on social inclusion. A total of 13 libraries in the Tolitoli Regency, spread

across various sub-districts, villages, and urban villages, have partnered to carry out this program. The partnership is important because, based on the Community Literacy Development Index assessment data in 2023, Tolitoli Regency obtained a score of 52.87, ranking 8th out of 13 regencies/cities in Central Sulawesi Province and falling into the "Moderate" category. Despite being in the moderate category, the literacy level of the Tolitoli community is at a low level.

The literacy issue is also included in the Regional Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMD) as a development problem in Tolitoli Regency related to non-basic service government affairs. The problems identified are: (1) lack of public awareness to utilize libraries, marked by relatively low reading interest and number of visitors, (2) limited book collections, (3) suboptimal library management, and (4) lack of facilities and infrastructure in regional libraries. Efforts are being made to develop libraries, including: (1) increasing the role of libraries, (2) raising public awareness of the reading culture, (3) seeking assistance for the development of library facilities and infrastructure, and (4) updating and increasing the collection of reading books in libraries.

The Library Transformation Based on Social Inclusion program in Tolitoli Regency is expected to be a solution to address the inequality of access to information and literacy. The program aims to enhance the role and function of libraries by involving the community as a lifelong learning vehicle, thereby improving the quality of life and well-being of library users. It is carried out by the National Library in collaboration with provincial, district/city, village, and urban village governments to develop the functions and roles of libraries in providing services that can improve the quality of life and welfare of the library user community.

The implementation of the library transformation program based on social inclusion in Tolitoli Regency faces several challenges, such as the need for careful planning, attracting public interest, managing activities effectively, ensuring information accessibility, and addressing resource limitations. However, the transformation cannot be achieved by relying solely on technological changes. It requires a strong commitment from various parties, including the government, library managers, and the community itself. The government plays a crucial role in ensuring sufficient budget and policies that support library innovation. Continuous training for librarians is also necessary to enable them to adapt quickly to technological developments and the increasingly dynamic needs of users.

The urgency of this research lies in the need to examine the application of service inclusion in the transformation of library services in Tolitoli Regency. By investigating the challenges, strategies, and impacts of implementing the four pillars of service inclusion (enabling opportunities, offering choice, relieving suffering, and fostering happiness), this study aims to provide valuable insights and recommendations for enhancing the inclusivity and effectiveness of library services in the region. The findings of this research are expected to contribute to the development of inclusive libraries that can serve as centers of empowerment, promoting literacy, education, and socio-economic growth for all members of the community.

2. Method

This study employs a qualitative case study approach to explore service inclusion in the transformation of libraries at the Library and Archives Service of Tolitoli Regency, Indonesia. Purposive sampling will be used to select 20 participants, including officials from the Library and Archives Service, librarians, library managers, master trainers, and community members. Data will be collected through observations, in-depth interviews, and document analysis at the Library and Archives Service office and selected public libraries within the regency.

The data analysis will follow Miles, et al. [4] interactive model, consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data condensation involves selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the raw data through summaries, coding, theme development, and analytic memos. Data display organizes and compresses the information into matrices, graphs, charts, and networks to facilitate conclusion drawing and action. Conclusion drawing and

verification involve interpreting the data, noting patterns and explanations, and verifying the conclusions through revisiting the data, discussions with colleagues, and seeking consensus.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the study, strategies such as triangulation, member checking, rich and thick description, clarifying researcher bias, maintaining consistency in coding, and peer debriefing will be employed. By following these rigorous research methods, this study aims to contribute to the understanding of service inclusion in the transformation of libraries in the context of international library and information science research.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1. Enabling Opportunities Pillar

The analysis of service inclusion in the transformation of the Tolitoli Regency Library reveals several key findings related to the implementation of the Enabling Opportunities pillar. The library has taken initial steps to provide equal access to literacy and information for vulnerable groups, such as individuals with disabilities. This is evident through the provision of wheelchair access and the library's efforts to reach remote areas through mobile library services. However, challenges remain in providing specialized services and resources for specific needs, such as braille books for the visually impaired.

The library has embraced technology and digital services as a means to create more opportunities for the community to access reading materials. The introduction of digital book collections and e-library applications has expanded the library's reach, particularly in remote areas. The library has also collaborated with local government agencies to provide digital literacy training and improve access to internet facilities. However, there is still room for improvement in terms of socialization and promotion of these digital services to ensure wider utilization by the public.

The library has actively engaged in collaborations with local communities and institutions to create more opportunities for literacy and social empowerment. Partnerships with correctional facilities, local communities, and youth organizations have enabled the library to extend its services and promote reading culture among diverse groups. The Library Transformation Based on Social Inclusion (TPBIS) program has been instrumental in involving communities from various regions, particularly those in remote areas, through activities that support the library's role as a center for information and community empowerment. Despite the progress made, the library still faces challenges in creating a comfortable and inclusive environment for all users. Limited air conditioning facilities and the need to change public perceptions about the importance of libraries in supporting education and literacy are among the key issues identified. Nevertheless, the library has shown significant improvements compared to its previous conditions and remains committed to continuously enhancing its infrastructure and facilities to create a welcoming and accommodating space for all visitors, including vulnerable groups.

The Tolitoli Regency Library's efforts to provide equal access to literacy and information for vulnerable groups, embrace technology and digital services, and engage in collaborations with local communities and institutions demonstrate its commitment to creating opportunities for social inclusion and empowerment. Recent research has highlighted the significance of libraries in promoting social inclusion and addressing the needs of marginalized communities. For example, a study by Terrile [5] emphasized the role of public libraries in fostering digital inclusion and bridging the digital divide, particularly in underserved areas. Similarly, a study by Kaunda and Chizwina [6] explored the impact of mobile library services in reaching out to rural communities and promoting literacy and information access. These findings resonate with the Tolitoli Regency Library's initiatives, such as the provision of digital services and the implementation of mobile library programs.

To enhance service inclusion through the Enabling Opportunities pillar, the Tolitoli Regency Library should focus on improving access for vulnerable groups by providing specialized resources and actively engaging with disability organizations Alsaif, et al. [7] maximizing the potential of digital services through targeted outreach and investment in infrastructure Pipa, et al. [8] expanding collaborations with diverse community partners to address specific needs of marginalized groups Mittal

and Bansal [9] and creating a more comfortable and inclusive environment by improving facilities and changing public perceptions through marketing campaigns [10].

3.2. Offering Choice Pillar

The library has made efforts to provide a diverse range of facilities that support various literacy and creative activities. These facilities include discussion rooms, a podcast room, and musical instruments for bands, a literacy stage, and a literacy café. These spaces enable users to engage in activities beyond reading, such as playing music or creating literacy content through podcasts. However, while the facilities are available, not all of them are fully utilized. The literacy café, for instance, has not been optimally used due to the lack of personnel to operate it. The library plans to involve the community, such as local small and medium enterprises (SMEs), in managing the café and using it for events like Ramadan gatherings. The most frequently used facilities are the literacy stage, discussion rooms, and podcast room, which have been utilized for activities like the selection of reading ambassadors.

The Tolitoli Regional Public Library has introduced digital library services as an alternative to conventional physical services. This allows users to access information through digital platforms, providing more options for those who may not be able to visit the library in person. The library has informed the public about its digital facilities through social media channels such as Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube, as well as through its e-library and digital literacy (e-book) services. The library aims to ensure that technology is accessible to all users, including those who are less familiar with it, by providing trained staff to assist them. However, the socialization of these services needs to be improved, as many visitors are still unaware of how to access the digital collections. Additionally, limited internet access in some areas hinders the full utilization of these digital services by the community.

One area that requires further improvement is the provision of facilities and services for vulnerable groups, such as people with disabilities. The library has acknowledged the availability of special pathways for people with disabilities, but to date, there have been no visits from this group. Although the library has committed to welcoming and responding to the needs of people with disabilities, the limited services available for them indicate that the choices offered are not yet fully inclusive. This suggests that while there are initial efforts to offer inclusive options, there are still gaps in improving services tailored to the needs of various vulnerable groups. The library faces the challenge of ensuring that services are genuinely accessible to all groups, including those with physical limitations or hearing impairments. Providing additional services, such as the use of sign language, could be one way to expand the choices for these groups, ensuring equal access to the available options.

The Offering Choice principle is also applied in programs that involve various age groups. The library organizes literacy programs designed for children and teenagers, such as coloring contests and storytelling competitions. They also involve the younger generation in the selection of Reading Ambassadors, giving them the opportunity to actively participate in literacy activities. The Tolitoli Library strives to avoid intergenerational discrimination by providing services and activities suitable for all age groups, ensuring that each group has the chance to engage in literacy activities that align with their needs and interests. These activities not only promote reading but also encourage active participation and the development of public speaking skills. The programs empower users from different age groups, preventing intergenerational discrimination.

Despite the library's efforts to offer various service options, there are still challenges to be addressed. Based on interviews with students and visitors, the library's book collection is still lacking, particularly in scientific fields. Most of the available books are outdated, with limited recent publications, especially in the sciences. The library plans to conduct surveys to assess the reference needs of each reader and determine the most sought-after books and scientific fields. This indicates that while the library provides some service options, there is still a need to cater to the educational and professional needs of its users. A wider range of book collections would allow users from diverse educational backgrounds and interests to find materials that suit their requirements.

The Tolitoli Regency Library's efforts to offer a diverse range of facilities, digital services, and programs for different age groups demonstrate its commitment to giving users control over their choices and catering to their specific needs and preferences. To enhance the implementation of the Offering Choice pillar, the Tolitoli Regency Library should focus on optimizing facility utilization through community partnerships Means, et al. [11] improving digital service accessibility and promotion Okoro and Olowookere [12] developing inclusive services for vulnerable groups in collaboration with disability organizations Mahmood, et al. [13] diversifying book collections based on user surveys and expert input Okunlaya, et al. [14] and adopting a participatory approach in service design by actively involving users in decision-making processes [15].

3.3. Relieving Suffering Pillar

The Tolitoli Regency Public Library has demonstrated a strong commitment to implementing the Relieving Suffering pillar through its efforts to ensure fair and inclusive access for all community members, especially vulnerable and underserved groups. The library strives to provide equal access to literacy and information for all visitors, regardless of their social, cultural, or economic background. This is evident through initiatives such as mobile library services for remote areas and the development of digital services. The library also conducts user satisfaction surveys to identify and address service gaps that may affect the experience of vulnerable groups. The library actively reaches out to underserved communities through programs like the Social Inclusion-Based Library Transformation (TPBIS), which involves literacy activities and outreach in remote villages. The library has also responded to the needs of disaster victims by providing books and storytelling sessions at evacuation sites, demonstrating its role in alleviating suffering through education and emotional support.

The library has established partnerships with local communities to enhance service quality and expand the reach of its literacy programs. Collaborations with correctional facilities allow inmates to access books through dedicated prison libraries. The library also works with local organizations, such as the Mata Pensil community and Ryder community, to bring services closer to the people and leverage community strengths to alleviate the suffering of specific groups. The library strives to ensure that all visitors are treated equally, regardless of their social, cultural, or age background. This is reflected in the library's provision of activities that cater to different age groups, such as coloring contests for children and storytelling competitions for elementary students. These efforts aim to create an inclusive environment where every visitor feels accepted and can fully utilize the library's services.

Despite the library's efforts, there are challenges in fully implementing the Relieving Suffering principle. Limited digital facilities and socialization, particularly in schools and universities, hinder the optimal utilization of library services by certain groups. Technological infrastructure constraints, such as a lack of computers and laptops, also pose difficulties in expanding services to more people in the digital era.

The Tolitoli Regency Public Library's initiatives, such as providing equal access, reaching out to vulnerable groups, collaborating with communities, and addressing potential biases, demonstrate its commitment to alleviating the suffering of those who lack access to essential literacy and information services. Recent research highlights the significance of public libraries in reducing social inequalities and promoting well-being. For example, a study by Grimes and Porter [16] found that public libraries play a crucial role in bridging the digital divide and providing access to technology for disadvantaged communities. Similarly, Lee [17] emphasized the importance of public libraries as social infrastructure that promotes social cohesion and resilience, particularly in times of crisis. These findings resonate with the Tolitoli Regency Public Library's efforts to provide digital access and support disaster-affected communities.

To strengthen the implementation of the Relieving Suffering pillar, the Tolitoli Regency Public Library should prioritize investing in digital infrastructure and training to expand access to technology Baporikar [18] developing targeted outreach programs for schools and universities to raise awareness about library services Bangani and Dube [19] allocating resources to increase the coverage of mobile

library services in underserved areas Wang, et al. [20] designing inclusive programs that cater to diverse user needs and backgrounds Harris, et al. [21] and fostering community partnerships to leverage local expertise and ensure the relevance and effectiveness of library services [22].

3.4. Fostering Happiness Pillar

The Tolitoli Regency Public Library strives to create a friendly and enjoyable environment for its visitors. Friendly and responsive service is a crucial element in fostering a positive atmosphere. The library staff actively welcomes visitors, especially school students from outside the region, to make them feel accepted. They also engage in deeper interactions, such as brief interviews with children to gather feedback on their library experience. The library has a dedicated children's play area with toys and games, catering to the needs of young visitors from kindergartens. Regular staff meetings are held to discuss ways to improve service quality, emphasizing friendliness and responsiveness.

Comfortable facilities play a vital role in creating a happy experience for visitors. The Tolitoli Library has made efforts to enhance its facilities to create a more comfortable and creativity-supportive environment. The library provides various spaces, including reading rooms, discussion areas, a podcast room, and even musical instruments to support creative activities. However, there are still some challenges, such as uneven air conditioning throughout the building, which can affect visitor comfort. The library also facilitates various programs and activities designed to foster happiness and engagement among visitors, such as the selection of reading ambassadors and competitions like coloring and storytelling for children.

To ensure that all library staff can provide optimal and enjoyable services, structured training programs need to be designed. These trainings should cover aspects such as friendly service, handling special needs, and managing digital facilities to create a truly inclusive and supportive environment. The library has conducted technical guidance (Bimtek) for school and village library managers to enhance their skills in collection management and service delivery. However, training opportunities at the district level are still limited, with only a few staff members able to attend provincial-level programs. Budget constraints also limit the reach of these trainings, hindering the ability to upskill all employees.

Based on interviews conducted at the Tolitoli Regency Public Library, factors influencing visitor satisfaction include staff service quality, facility comfort, and programs supporting literacy. However, there are challenges that may impact satisfaction levels, such as limitations in service, suboptimal facilities, and lack of socialization. The library uses surveys to measure user satisfaction, but the data from these questionnaires is still limited as the system was only implemented in 2024, and feedback results are not yet available. The frequency of visits is also considered an important indicator of visitor satisfaction, as satisfied visitors tend to return to the library.

The Tolitoli Library faces several challenges in implementing the Fostering Happiness pillar. One of the biggest challenges is the limited budget to support various literacy programs and activities. Interviews with library staff reveal that budget constraints hinder the execution of work programs, with funds primarily covering operational costs like electricity and internet. Programs such as the selection of reading ambassadors lack sufficient funding, leading to independently organized activities. Some work programs may face budget cuts in 2025 due to financial limitations. These challenges affect the library's ability to provide enriching experiences and support literacy growth in Tolitoli.

The Tolitoli Regency Public Library's efforts to provide welcoming services, enhance facilities, facilitate engaging programs, and measure visitor satisfaction demonstrate its commitment to promoting happiness and well-being among its users. Recent research highlights the significance of public libraries in contributing to community happiness and social well-being. For example, a study by Corrall [23] found that public libraries play a crucial role in fostering social capital and promoting social inclusion, which are key components of community well-being. Similarly, a study by Adetayo and Lawal [24] explored the concept of "library as place" and emphasized the importance of creating welcoming and inclusive spaces that support diverse user needs and promote happiness.

To strengthen the implementation of the Fostering Happiness pillar, the Tolitoli Regency Public Library should prioritize developing a comprehensive staff training program that covers friendly service and managing digital facilities Kutty, et al. [25] enhancing facility comfort based on user feedback Marujo and Casais [26] expanding engaging program offerings in collaboration with community partners Choudhury and Kalita [27] refining the visitor satisfaction measurement system to gather timely insights Tang and Su [28] and actively advocating for adequate funding by demonstrating the impact of initiatives on community well-being [29].

4. Conclusion

The research on service inclusion in the transformation of the Tolitoli Regency Public Library through the lens of the Four Pillars of Service Inclusion (Enabling Opportunities, Offering Choice, Relieving Suffering, and Fostering Happiness) reveals a strong commitment to creating an inclusive and empowering library environment. The library has taken significant steps to enable opportunities by providing equal access to literacy and information for vulnerable groups, embracing digital services, and collaborating with local communities. It has offered choices through diverse facilities, digital library technology, and intergenerational services while actively working to address potential biases. The library has also strived to relieve suffering by ensuring fair service access, catering to the needs of vulnerable groups, collaborating with communities, and addressing potential biases. Finally, it has fostered happiness through friendly and enjoyable services, facility enhancements, and engaging programs and activities.

However, the research also highlights several challenges and areas for improvement. These include the need to enhance access for vulnerable groups, maximize the potential of digital services, expand collaborations with diverse community partners, create a more comfortable and inclusive environment, strengthen digital infrastructure, enhance school and university outreach, expand mobile library services, prioritize inclusive programming, and advocate for adequate funding. To address these challenges and further strengthen its service inclusion efforts, the Tolitoli Regency Public Library should focus on providing specialized resources and actively engaging with disability organizations, investing in targeted outreach and digital infrastructure, expanding collaborations to address the specific needs of marginalized groups, improving facilities and changing public perceptions through marketing campaigns, developing a comprehensive staff training program, refining the visitor satisfaction measurement system, and actively advocating for adequate funding by demonstrating the impact of initiatives on community well-being.

Transparency:
The authors confirm that the manuscript is an honest, accurate, and transparent account of the study; that no vital features of the study have been omitted; and that any discrepancies from the study as planned have been explained. This study followed all ethical practices during writing.

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