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Article Information experience of village library staff [Information Development 1-6](#) <sup>a</sup> [The Author\(s\) 2021 Article reuse guidelines: sagepub.com/journals-permissions DOI: 10.1177/02666669211030600 journals.sagepub.com/home/idv Heriyanto Diponegoro University Selyna Anggitia Diponegoro University Abstract Village libraries, which are generally voluntarily-operated, serve their local people with information and activities according to the local need. Volunteers manage libraries to provide information relevant to the locals' interests and lines of work. This includes crops, fisheries, small home enterprises, as well as practices in preserving traditional cultures. In light of this, village libraries play an important role in supporting their local people by enhancing their competencies through the provision of information. This study aims to explore the information experiences of library staff when managing their respective libraries. The present study involved interviews with five library staff, uncovering their perspective on how they engage with information when managing the library. The data collected were analyzed using thematic analysis, revealing three themes related to the library staffs' information experiences: information need, information network, and information impact. The results showed that the staff relied much on books to get information and utilized social media to find and connect with colleagues in order to learn more about library management. It was also through social media that the library staff made efforts to improve their competencies in managing local libraries. Keywords information experience, library staff, library management, information resources, village libraries. Indonesia Submitted: 30 April, 2021; Accepted: 16 June, 2021. Introduction Information experience is understood as a phenomenon where a person experiences or obtains meaning when they interact with information in aspects of their daily lives \(C. Bruce, Davis, Hughes, Partridge, and Stoodley, 2015\). Assessing a person's information experience means understanding the person's daily life, especially their experiences and what they then perceive as information. Moreover, observing someone's information experience helps in understanding how information appears and impacts a person's life \(C. Bruce et al., 2015\). Research on information experience, hence, is multi-dimensional, meaning that it can be experienced in various contexts ranging from that of the world of education to the world of work. One of the phenomena that can be studied is the information experience of village library staff. The present study explored how information experience appeared, what was felt by the library staff when engaging or using information sources, and how the information experience played a role and affected the life of the staff. Bruce \(2008\) stated that information experience is not limited to a person's experience in seeking information, but rather illustrates a comprehensive view of a person's use of information that encompasses thoughts, feelings, cultural and language dimensions, as well as information seeking activities. Corresponding author: Heriyanto, \[Library Science, Faculty of Humanities, Diponegoro University, Semarang, Indonesia\]\(#\). Email: \[heriyanto@live.undip.ac.id\]\(mailto:heriyanto@live.undip.ac.id\) The study of information experience should be viewed holistically, meaning that its understanding should not involve only one or two parts or perspectives. Specifically, it](#)

involves not only understanding how a person seeks information, or finding out the sources of information, but also the observation of thoughts and feelings within the process of interacting with information in a person's work or study. Indonesia has village libraries in almost every province. Each village library encounters challenges in providing information services to the village communities. The character of the surrounding community, prevailing local cultures, and library staff's skill in managing the library are aspects of the challenges that have to be overcome. This study examined two village libraries in Central Java, namely a village library governed by a library science study program and one that was appointed as the best Village Library at the regency level. The initial perception of the authors was that as village libraries were governed by a study program or appointed the best library in its region, the staff of the library would recognize the need to perpetually develop their information services. Currently research on village libraries revolves around community empowerment through the village libraries (Maskurotunitsa and Rohmiyati, 2016; Rohman and Sukaesih, 2017) and how the libraries are transformed in carrying out informal education functions for the surrounding village communities (Omar, Shaffril, D'Silva, Bolong, and Hamzah, 2015; Zulfah and Aisa, 2018). So far there has been no study on the information experience of village library staff in their efforts to fulfill their information needs regarding library management. [This study aims to understand and explain the information experiences of village library staff.](#) Literature review Information experience is a library and information science area that identifies a person's ideas and thoughts surrounding their interactions with information within their daily life and how the information transforms them into an informed person (Savolainen, 2020). The study of information experience is essentially a study of human experience that focuses on the subjectivity of a person regarding several aspects of their life. As a study that focuses on the subjectivity of each individual, specifically on how people seek, evaluate, use and share information, it can provide more complex and in-depth insights than examining the stages in seeking information or using and sharing information, that are more mechanical in practice. [In library and information science, the study of information experience is often carried out in the context of information literacy \(Heriyanto et al., 2021; Savolainen, 2020\).](#) This is shown in a study conducted by Bruce (1997), which explored how a person uses information to learn. Later, Bruce et al. (2015) articulated information experience with more detail and defined it [as 'the way in which people experience or derive meaning from the way in which they engage with information and their lived worlds as they go about their daily life and work'.](#) This makes it clear that the emphasis in the concept of information experience is 'engagement with information'. Therefore, in the study of information experience, the objects of exploration are peoples' thoughts, feelings, senses, and their cultural and social influences (Bruce et al., 2015). A study that observed information experience was conducted by Yates and Partridge (2014), exploring [people's experience in using information to learn about health.](#) Demasson (2014) investigated how people engaged in serious leisure activities by using information. [Sayyad Abdi, Partridge, and Bruce \(2016\) researched web designers and developers encounters related to their information experiences.](#) In all of the above studies, the focus of study is on the interactions of each individual with information in their environment when they are in their daily context. Using the same theoretical framework, namely information experience, this study identifies the information experience of librarians in managing and developing village library information services. Method The research involved five participants all of which were library staff of two village libraries. In accordance [with the aim of this study, a criterion was considered for the recruitment process of the participants.](#) The participants were village library staff who have been in their jobs for at least 12 months. Two village libraries were chosen as objects of the study with the consideration that they were libraries that have been actively serving the community for 2 years, one of which is a library that received book assistance and basic training in library management from a library science study program of a state university in Central Java. These two libraries have proven their consistency in serving the information needs of the local village Heriyanto and Anggitia: Information experience of village library staff 3 community after training provided by the study program. The data collection involved semi-structured interviews, as this type of interview can be useful in revealing the participants' real life experiences. [The participants were provided with an information sheet, consent form, and time to ask questions.](#) The information sheet and the consent form allowed the participants [to understand the parameters of the study \(Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015\).](#) In accordance with established qualitative practice, [the collected data were analyzed by employing thematic analysis, a method that can be applied to identify and examine patterns or themes within a data set considered to be important for the description of the phenomena of a study.](#) (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis was conducted in this study [to interpret various aspects of the topic being studied by encoding the obtained qualitative data \(Braun and Clarke, 2006\).](#) The analysis processes consisted of three phases, namely, familiarization with the data, generating codes, and identifying themes. [In the first phase, interview transcripts were used to familiarize the researchers with the data and were read two to three times to be thoroughly understood. After each transcript was read, a summary was written to describe researchers' reflections on the data in the transcripts. In the second phase, codes were generated for the data. These codes identified the features of the data that appeared relevant to the phenomenon being studied. In the third phase, themes were identified. 'Themes' refers to patterns in data that explain and organize the aspects of the phenomenon derived from the data. The codes generated in the previous phase were reviewed and examined multiple times in the light of the main research question, i.e., how was the library staff information experience in managing the village libraries? The identified themes are explained in the following section.](#) Findings The five interview participants have varied backgrounds in term of library management competencies. [The interview findings, arranged thematically below, illustrate the information experience of librarians in managing their village libraries.](#) Information need Information need illustrated the various information needs of the participants in managing libraries. None of the participants had a background in library science, so they recognized the need of various kinds of information on topics such as collection management and provision of information services, including collection cataloging. 'First, when I started this, I was looking for a book, entitled 'this is how I should take steps to do library activities, to establish a library'. I was intrigued by the numbers on the back of the book, how that numbers were arranged, you know, it was my curiosity at the beginning, I finally found it as Dewey's classification numbers.' Another participant commented that he needed information on the management of a library room layout. He added that the design and layout of a library room can create an efficient space for a large library collection with minimal space conditions. This need was based on the limitations of the village library space, which was smaller than the public library in the city. Hence, he realised that knowledge of the function of library spaces was highly important. The librarians also needed any resources in print about plastic waste recycling. This is because the libraries engaged with communities who have concern about protecting their local environment. The librarian was asked about any collection on how best to recycle plastic waste to be an environmental household item. Information network The information network theme represents the efforts made by the participants in identifying information sources to meet their information needs. This theme also describes the various types of information sources selected for use by the participants. [The majority of the participants stated that the sources of information they use include printed and electronic information.](#) In addition, they also consider their fellow library colleagues as their source of information, both colleagues in their own library and colleagues from other institutions. The source of information most often used by the participants is books. They chose books because it was easier to retrieve information that they had previously looked into. Other participants said they used books because they believed the information was more accurate than other sources of information. They trust books because the information contained in the books is the result of the writings of authors who are experts in their field. Other sources of information that the participants used are Google and social media platforms. The reason they choose to use them is that they are more efficient and time-saving. These digital sources of information would come second when they were not able to find the books they needed. Some participants admit to contacting fellow library staff when they need help through social media. They admit to sharing information about library management or information on the books needed. Apart from being a quick and easy to use means of communication, some participants agreed they could easily share digital information sources they found through social media with their colleagues, so that the sources could benefit their colleagues. Thus, in addition to being a source of information, social media was also used as a tool for [the participants to communicate and share information, as well as](#) expanding connections between library staff and the internal and external features of library institutions. Some of the participants stated that they located several village library management associations through social

media. Participants' experiences in communicating with these associations is an advantage for the libraries they manage. They received book grants and training in library information service management. Institutions that gave book grants to them included public libraries and universities. Information impact The majority of participants said that they receive various benefits from the information they obtained. The information was useful in enhancing their competence as a library staff and improving the quality of the library's information services. One participant stated that they received assistance on the library data management information system from the library science student community. The information system was very useful for library collection management purposes and as an online catalogue that can be used by library users to search for collections managed by the library. Most participants admitted that the various information and communication media they use successfully connected them with institutions that had concerns in library development, such as the National Library of Indonesia, regional libraries, and social communities that were established independently by the community. The participants continue to interact with these institutions and individuals in the village library activities they manage. The participants recognized that the interactions they had with various government and private institutions provide motivation for increasing their capacity as library staff. Most participants commented that they felt better at searching for information, and thus more confident in finding information that was relevant to the needs of library management, whilst also feeling more motivated in helping people to find information that was relevant to their needs. The library staff were able to help farmers in producing better crops as well as improving farmers' skill in the utilization of fertilizer. The ability to search for information relevant to the local communities' needs and their ability to contribute to society have stimulated a positive feeling to the participants, in that their profession as library staff is a profession that is beneficial to society. Discussion This study provides a snapshot of village library staffs' information experience in managing their village libraries and an evidence-based understanding of library staff's engagement with information for enhancing village library management and services. The need for information felt by most village library staff was triggered by the need for staff to be able to carry out village library management in accordance with the characteristics and culture of the local community. In particular, information need is related to the professionalism of staff and how they are able to provide the best services for the community, both in the form of a comfortable library layout and provision of library collections, and most importantly to provide support for the farmers in improving agricultural facilities and better crops. These findings confirmed that a library can be a community empowerment agent by providing information in print and by helping farmers and environmentalism in finding and selecting the best resources for enhancing the quality of crops and recycling plastic waste. Striving for better professionalism or performance is often the main trigger in the emergence of a person's information needs that encourages them to seek relevant information. This finding is in line with the studies conducted by Teasdale (2020) and Wojciechowska (2020), in which it was presented that the desire to be successful in carrying out work and the desire to contribute to the profession are the stimulants for searching for information. Heriyanto and Anggitia: Information experience of village library staff 5 The information experience of library staff has led to the finding that staff were very dependent on their ability to use social media in finding information that was relevant to the needs of village library management. More than that, staff develop their competence as library staff as well as communicating and sharing knowledge with fellow village library staff through social media. These findings confirmed Luo and Hostetler (2020) and Smith (2021), who conveyed in their study findings that social media is used as a platform for librarians to develop their librarian competencies. Luo and Hostetler (2020) found that social media provides infrastructure and resources that librarians can use to increase their competence, as well as a platform for networking and knowledge sharing. Conclusion The library staff's experience with their world of information is a complex phenomenon that encompasses both individual and communal features. The need for information may arise for various reasons and for library staff, one of the reasons is the desire to provide the best service and provision of collections in accordance with the information needs of the local community. To meet these needs, the village library staff use various sources of information, including social media, as one of the main platforms in fulfilling their information needs. In addition, they use social media to explore and network with a larger circle of colleagues to study and share knowledge. These study findings can benefit authorities and universities to support village library staff in managing their local libraries. Future research can also build upon these findings by extending the study to explore how other library staff and librarians experience their information world. References Braun, V., and Clarke, V. (2006). Demonstrating rigor in thematic analysis: A hybrid approach of inductive and deductive coding and theme development. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 5(1), 80–92. Retrieved from [http://www.ualberta.ca/~iiqm/backissues/5\\_1/pdf/fereday.pdf](http://www.ualberta.ca/~iiqm/backissues/5_1/pdf/fereday.pdf) Brinkmann, S., and Kvale, S. (2015). *Interviews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing*. SAGE Publications. Bruce, C. (1997). *Seven Faces of Information Literacy*. Adelaide: AUSLIBPress. Bruce, C., Davis, K., Hughes, H., Partridge, H., and Stoodley, I. (2015). *Information Experience: Contemporary Perspective*. 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Social capital, trust and social activity among librarians: Results of research conducted in 20 countries across the world. *Library and Information Science Research*, 42(4), 101049. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lisr.2020.101049> Yates, C., and Partridge, H. (2014). Exploring information literacy during a natural disaster: The 2011 Brisbane flood. *Library and Information Science*, 9, 119–134. <https://doi.org/10.1108/S1876-056220140000010006> Zulfah, M. A., and Aisa, A. (2018). Transformasi Perpustakaan Desa. Seminar Nasional Multidisiplin, (September), 192–199. Retrieved from <http://ejournal.unwaha.ac.id/index.php/snami/article/view/289> About the authors Heriyanto is based in library science at Diponegoro University, Semarang. His research has focused on the ways people experience information to learn as students, as professionals, and as people in their everyday life. He graduated from Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia for his master and doctoral degrees. His PhD research was about the information literacy of researchers who have experienced open access. Some of his subjects at Diponegoro University include information services, information management, and research methods. Email: [heriyanto@live.undip.ac.id](mailto:heriyanto@live.undip.ac.id) Selyna Anggitia is an Early-Career Researcher in Library Science at Diponegoro University, Semarang. Her research interest is on how people experience information during their day-to-day life, especially people who are working in the library. She has experience as a

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