

# **An investigation of the continuing professional development practices of Indonesian academic libraries**

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## **Abstract**

**Purpose** – This paper reports on ongoing research examining the present and desired state of academic library staff education and professional development in Indonesia. The long term goal of the research is to determine ways in which Indonesian academic libraries and their staff can be supported in order to assist universities in producing high quality research, teaching, and learning outcomes.

**Methodology** – A survey was delivered to managers of libraries serving Indonesian public universities. The survey instrument used in this research was based on that used in the neXus2 survey distributed to Australian library managers in 2007. The paper includes a comparison of survey results on key outcomes for Indonesian and Australian library managers.

**Findings** – The paper reports on the library policies and practices regarding the current level and type of continuing professional development and work place training; and the management, funding and prioritization of continuing professional development in Indonesian academic libraries.

**Practical Implications** — The results have implications for the planning and implementation of continuing professional development in Indonesian academic libraries

**Originality** — This paper reports the results of one of the few major studies of library staff development undertaken in a developing country.

**Keywords** Indonesia, Academic libraries, Continuing professional development, Staff development

**Paper type** Research paper

## **Introduction**

New entrants into the library and information science (LIS) professions have been equipped by their first qualification with a basic set of skills and knowledge that enable them to compete for positions in the workplace and commence their professional life. Depending on

the country where this qualification was undertaken, it might be obtained from a university of some other degree awarding institution of higher education, and it might be a Diploma, a Degree, a Graduate Diploma or a Masters qualification.

It will still be necessary, however, for the new graduate to undertake ongoing education or workplace learning. This ongoing learning will be required for a number of reasons, including the need to;

- ..develop skills that are required by a particular workplace or type of employer;
- ..keep abreast of changing technology or other workplace developments;
- ..acquire new skills that are needed in order to fill promotional positions of other changes to job descriptions.

Needless to say the LIS professions are not alone in this regard, and most if not all professions are now placing an emphasis on the need for ongoing education and learning as being essential components of an individual's professionalism.

It is also arguable that the need for continuing professional development is greater and more immediate in developing countries. This is due to a number of factors including;

- ..the lower standard of qualifications that are frequently obtained as a first qualification for professional practice;
- ..the more rapid rate of workplace change due to the higher rate of uptake of new technologies as countries work to close the development and technology gaps;
- .. the developing concept of 'professionalism' as LIS workers increasingly view their occupation as a career rather than a job.

With considerations such as these in mind, this paper reports on some of the results obtained from an ongoing research project that is considering the issues of education and continuing professional development in Indonesian academic libraries. The overall goal of the research is to investigate ways in which staff in Indonesian academic libraries can be supported in order to assist the higher education sector in producing high quality research, teaching, and learning outcomes. This includes an investigation of the current and desired level and type of continuing professional development (CPD) in Indonesian academic libraries, and the management, funding and prioritization of CPD in a library system beset with severe

financial challenges. The focus in the current paper is on the results obtained from a questionnaire distributed to managers of 133 Indonesian academic libraries in order to collect data related to current management and implementation of CPD. This questionnaire was designed to complement a previously conducted questionnaire that had surveyed the staff of these same libraries regarding their attitudes to education and CPD (Maesaroh and Genoni, 2009).

The definition of CPD used for the purpose of this research is derived from Majid (2004); “a systematic method of learning that leads to growth and improvement in professional abilities, enabling individuals to function successfully in a changing work environment . . . the purpose of continuing professional development activities is to fill-in the knowledge gaps between formal education and the needs of the professional practice” (p. 58). CPD might be achieved by various means including post-qualification education or library-based workplace training. For the purpose of the current paper CPD is synonymous with “staff development”.

### **Literature Review**

Background reading relating to the Indonesian higher education system and training for academic librarians in the country has previously been reported by Maesaroh and Genoni, (2009). Some of the problems with the current education system for LIS professionals include the lack of facilities and access to sufficiently advanced technology (Pendit, 2001; Farida and Purnomo, 2006); shortage of suitable library texts in both print and electronic formats (Damayani, 2005); problems with curriculum that often fails to address key professional requirements (Ardoni, 2005; Kamil, 2005); and the inadequate qualifications and experience of the teaching staff (Sulistyo-Basuki, 2006).

The problems with library education in Indonesia has been recently linked to the poor professional status of librarians including low salary levels (Wijoyo, 2008; Subrata, 2009; Suherman, 2009); the low self-esteem of the profession itself (Suherman, 2009); and the chronic underfunding experienced by the library sector (Wijoyo, 2008; Suherman, 2009). Samosir and Syahfitri (2008) have considered the situation of librarians working in the Indonesian higher education sector, and identified the particular stresses as being low remuneration, heavy workloads, deficiencies in management and administration, low levels of appreciation of the professionalism of library staff, and uncertainty regarding the career paths available to librarians.

While addressing the problems with library education remains an issue of great importance in Indonesia, there is also a need to ameliorate the resulting problems with the use of CPD. There is, however, an almost a total absence of literature examining the issue of continuing education and training for LIS professionals in Indonesia. This lack of consideration of CPD is despite the shortcomings in Indonesian library education and existing exiting skills that have been variously reported.

The one significant study undertaken of recent CPD activity in Indonesia resulted from a survey reported by Maesaroh and Genoni (2009) of 812 librarians working in 133 university libraries, and compared the resulting data with results from a similar study conducted in Australia. They concluded that in comparison the Indonesian respondents reported a greater need for CPD and a higher rate of participation in a range of CPD activities, but with a lower level of satisfaction with the results of their training.

In general the various issues faced in Indonesia with regard to the quality of library education and the quality and availability of CPD could be said to be related to the general underfunding of the higher education system in Indonesia when compared to more developed countries, and a general under-recognition of librarianship as a profession in Indonesia. Other developing countries frequently face problems similar to these, and a number of those other developing countries have reported on research relating to CPD. Some of the relevant studies have focused on staff working in academic libraries.

Ramaiah and Moorthy (2002) examined and reported on the use of structured, short-term Continuing Education Programmes for college librarians in India. Their research included an examination of the areas for priority training and highlighted the importance of various categories of IT related training needs. Anwar and Al-Ansari (2002) investigated the continuing professional development practices of academic libraries in the Gulf States, and in a methodology similar to that employed in the current research they surveyed the heads of 15 publicly funded academic institutions (with 13 responses). They reported that there was a “general lack of a systematic program for CPD in the participating libraries to the extent that 12 of the 13 libraries do not have a written staff development policy” (p. 238). The research also included investigation of the incentives that would encourage staff to participate, and the needs for ongoing training in the key areas of ‘professional skills’ and ‘management skills’.

Adanu (2006) undertook a study in order to determine the level of support for CPD in five state-owned universities in Ghana. She conducted a survey of, and interviews, with employees of the five universities, concluding that although the university library environment in Ghana 'is to some extent conducive to CPD activities' (p. 303) there is nonetheless need to develop more formal policy development in this regard. There was also a high level of recognition by respondents that the employing institution and the individual staff member share responsibility for identifying and meeting CPD needs.

More recently Abba and Dawha (2009) investigated the CPD needs of staff at the Federal University of Technology in Nigeria, concluding on the basis of a survey of staff that there was a greater need for on-the-job training and informal training than for formal education. "Inadequate funding" was nominated by 100% of the 40 respondents as the key factor militating against the provision of adequate training, with 62.5% of respondents also noting the "lack of written training policy". Gosine-Boodoo and McNish (2009) undertook a survey of 100 librarians in the Caribbean (54% from academic libraries) in order to examine whether they are more likely to be motivated to undertake CPD as a result of the own need for personal and professional development or because of an organisational mandate. They concluded that the existence of formal CPD policies and programs "does not appear to have any significant motivating influence on employees' pursuit of CPD" (p. 210). Gosine-Boodoo and McNish also concluded that there was a need for more work to be done in aligning the CPD needs of individuals with the goals and priorities of employing libraries.

In the context of Southeast Asia Majid (2004) surveyed the CPD offerings by library schools in Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. He noted the difficulties faced by LIS schools in developing countries in providing for emerging competencies in their first qualifying courses, and concluded that there was need for them to provide additional CPD activity. Majid recommended that "instead of considering CPD activities as an additional or ad hoc responsibility, the LIS schools in the region should make it a part of their core responsibilities" (p. 58).

### **Methodology**

This study used a questionnaire for data collection. The questionnaire design was based (with permission) on that which was used for the neXus2 survey distributed to Australian library managers in 2008. The questionnaire focused on the "recruitment and retention as well as the

training and development of library staff” (Hallam, 2008, p.1). The neXus2 questionnaire was adapted for use in the Indonesian environment by modifying terminology where appropriate and deleting some questions that were made redundant by local circumstances. The amended questionnaire was then translated into Indonesian to make it easier for respondents to understand and respond accurately. The results reported in this paper represent selected data collected from questions addressing matters related to CPD.

The sample was 133 Indonesian public universities, consisting of 81 public universities under the Ministry of National Education (MoNE), and 52 Islamic public universities under the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA). The questionnaire was distributed to all library managers of these universities. Seventy questionnaires were returned, a response rate of 53%. Of these, 44 (62.9%) were from MoNE universities and 26 (37.1%) from MoRA universities.

### Questionnaire results

The questionnaire comprised of 72 questions in five sections. Only those questions of most relevance to the libraries’ practices with regard to staff development are reported here. Responding libraries were asked to indicate the number of permanent professional staff as a library’s staff profile is closely related to its capacity to support CPD activities.

**Table I.** Number of Permanent Professional Staff

	n	%
Zero	5	7.1
1-5	33	47.1
6-10	8	11.4
11-20	10	14.3
21-30	11	15.7
31-40	1	1.4
41-50	1	1.4
76-100	1	1.4
Total	70	100.0

The data indicates the generally small size of Indonesian academic libraries, with nearly half (54.2%) of the responding libraries having less than 5 permanent professional staff, and nearly two-thirds (65.6%) having less than 10 permanent professional staff. The result of 19.9% of responding libraries having over 20 professional staff, can be compared to the

Australian neXus2 survey whereby 60% of the university libraries reported a professional staff in excess of 20.

The small numbers of staff available to the Indonesian academic libraries mean that they may have limited capacity to develop highly formalized or structured programs of internal training, or have the financial capacity to afford regular external training. It is also likely to be difficult for individuals working in these libraries to develop high degrees of specialisation, and this will in turn have implications for their CPD needs.

**Table II.** Organisation has a formal strategic planning document

	n	%
Yes	43	62.3
No	20	29.0
Unsure	6	8.7
Total	69	100.0

These results indicate that the majority of responding libraries (62.3%) have a formal strategic planning document, while some 37.7% either do not have such a document or are unaware of its existence. A formal strategic plan would normally include consideration of matters related to staff development and may therefore serve as a precursor to a planned approach to staff development. For example of the Australian libraries responding to the neXus2 survey, 90% of the university libraries had a strategic plan, and 85% of all libraries surveyed reported that staff development had either a “Medium” or “High” priority in their strategic plan. The neXus2 survey also reported that 75% of Australian academic libraries have a “formally stated policy on staff development” (p. 78), suggesting that Australian libraries are far more likely to have the benefit of a formal policy document in directing the staff development activity.

Respondents were asked to indicate the approach taken by the library they manage to staff development.

**Table III.** Existence of staff development program

	n	%
Has a planned staff development program	41	59.4
Has an informal approach to staff development	15	21.7
Regards staff development as primarily the responsibility of individual staff members	13	18.8
Total	69	100.0

The responses indicate that the majority (59.4%) of the libraries have a planned staff development program, and in all 81.1% of the library managers reported that their library has either a “planned” or “informal” approach to staff development. Only 18.8% of the managers report leaving staff development entirely to the individual staff members.

An indication of an organisation’s commitment to staff development is likely to be provided by the percentage of the budget provide, and respondents were therefore asked to indicate the amount (as a percentage of the library budget) that they allocate for this purpose.

**Table IV.** Budget allocation for staff development

Quantum	Budget allocation for staff development					
	Yes		No		Unsure	
	-	-	25	39%	8	13%
0% - 5%	24	38%	0	0%	0	0%
6% - 10%	5	9%	0	0%	0	0%
11% - 15%	1	2%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	30	48%	25	39%	8	13%

Responding library managers indicate that 30 (48%) of the libraries have an allocation for staff development. It is interesting to note, however, that some 13% of the respondents were “Unsure” about the matter, suggesting that the concept might be foreign to them. It might also be safe to assume that the libraries which either don’t have an allocation for staff development or are “Unsure” are those that are likely to spend less of their resources in this way.

Of the 30 libraries that do have a budget allocation for staff development, 24 (80%) allocate less than 5% of their budget for this purpose.

Respondents were asked to indicate their library’s highest priority for staff development in the “next 2-3 years”.

**Table V.** Priority for staff development over the next 2-3 years

	n	%
Developing IT skill	19	47.5
Continuing LIS Education	12	30.0
Customer services	5	12.5
Management	2	5.0
Research	1	2.5
Leadership	1	2.5
Total	40	100.0

Only 40 responses were received to this question, likely indicating that for a number of these library managers there is no designated priority with regard to staff development. Nearly half (47.5%) of those managers that did respond nominated “Developing IT skill” as their foremost priority. It is interesting to note that the second most common response (30%) was “Continuing LIS education”. This suggests that there is recognition by these managers that many of their staff may be lacking the necessary basic education required to prepare them for the workplace. As noted earlier this is problem in Indonesia (and very likely other developing countries) where standards of entry-level education can fall below the desired standard for a number of reasons.

Respondents were provided with a list of continuing professional development activities and asked to indicate the frequency with which they were undertaken by staff with support from the organisation (Table VI).

**Table VI.** Frequency of activities funded by staff development program

	Regular	%	Occasional	%	Never	%	Total
Seminars / workshops	16	23.9	47	70.1	4	6.0	67
Visits to other library and information services	14	21.9	43	67.2	7	10.9	64
Job exchanges within the organisation	14	21.5	28	43.1	23	35.4	65
Orientation / induction programs	12	19.0	26	41.3	25	39.7	63
In-house short courses with internal trainers	12	18.8	38	59.4	14	21.9	64
Attendance at pre- or post-conference workshops	11	17.2	48	75.0	5	7.8	64
Attendance at conferences	11	17.2	41	64.1	12	18.8	64
On-the job training programs	7	11.5	34	55.7	20	32.8	61
External study courses (diploma, degree etc)	5	7.7	44	67.7	16	24.6	65
In-house short course with external trainers	5	7.8	43	67.2	16	25.0	64
External short courses	4	6.1	44	66.7	18	27.3	66
Attendance at continuing professional education events	4	6.2	31	47.7	30	46.2	65
Guest speakers	3	4.8	41	65.1	19	30.2	63
Staff exchanges with other organisations	1	1.6	22	34.9	40	63.5	63

Responses indicate that a variety of professional development activities are supported by staff development programs. “Seminars/ workshops” (91% “Regular” or “Occasional”) and “Visits to other library and information services” (89.1% “Regular” or “Occasional”) stood out as being clearly the commonly used forms of staff development.

Other responses were notable for the number of libraries that report they “Never” use them for the purpose of staff development. In particular this is the case for “Job exchanges within the organisation” (35.4% “Never”), and “On the job training programs” (32.8% “Never”). This is despite these two methods of skill development being amongst those which are reported to be used most widely on a “Regular” basis. This discrepancy may be explained by the number of small libraries represented in the questionnaire responses, with these libraries finding they have little capacity to undertake these forms of staff development. It is less easy

to justify or explain the low use of “Orientation / induction programs”, with 39.7% of managers reporting these are never used in their library. This seems quite remarkable for a seemingly critical form of staff development.

Table VI also provides data regarding the use of internal or external training, with twelve managers reporting they make “Regular” use of internal trainers to run short courses, as opposed to only five managers reporting a similar level of use of external trainers for the same purpose. In addition four managers reported relying upon “External short courses”. An additional question further investigated the areas of skill development for which libraries rely upon internal training and those for which they use external training or trainers. This was considered relevant as it would provide some evidence of those skills for which managers felt were already available within their current staff and those for which it was felt necessary to rely upon external knowledge. The results of these questions are reported in Tables VI and VII.

**Table VII.** Internal training

	Regular	%	Occasional	%	Never	%
Technology skills training	7	10.9	45	70.3	12	18.8
Job-oriented skills training (excluding technology)	5	7.9	46	73.0	12	19.0
Management training	5	8.1	46	74.2	11	17.7
Customer-service related training	5	7.8	45	70.3	14	21.9
Personal/career development	5	7.8	41	64.1	18	28.1
Other professional development (e.g. subject specialty, library issues)	4	6.5	49	79.0	9	14.5

For all of the six nominated areas of training there appears to be capacity to use internal sources of training. For five of these areas there is internal training conducted on a “Regular” or “Occasional” basis by at least 75% of the responding libraries. For each of the six areas of training, however, at least some libraries indicated that they the “Never” provide training. These responses are very likely to be drawn from those 13 libraries (see Table III) that undertake no active staff development and regard it as the responsibility of the individual staff member. It is also noticeable that some respondents failed to reply to this question (or

elements of it) indicating that they are also unlikely to be actively engaged in training in the nominated area.

**Table VIII.** External training

	Regular	%	Occasional	%	Never	%
Job-oriented skills training (excluding technology)	4	6.1	51	78.5	10	15.4
Customer-service related training	4	6.1	47	72.3	14	21.5
Other professional development (e.g. subject specialty, library issues)	3	4.5	53	80.3	10	15.2
Management training	3	4.6	49	75.4	13	20.0
Technology skills training	2	3.0	56	84.8	8	12.1
Personal/career development	6	9.2	40	61.5	19	29.2

The data for external training appears to be broadly consistent with that for internal training, at least with regard to the balance between the categories of “Regular”, “Occasional” and “Never”. The responses indicate that for many libraries external training is an option that is used on an “Occasional” basis at least for many of these areas.

It is relevant to note that whereas seven libraries undertake “Regular” internal training related to “Technology skills” (The most frequent skill subject to regular internal training), only two libraries reported regularly using external training in this regard (the fifth most frequent use of external training). It is, however, difficult to know exactly what is implied by this discrepancy. It may reflect that libraries feel they have capacity to provide internally-sourced training in this skill area, or it might simply reflect a constant need in this area which can only be met by relying upon workplace based trainers.

A question asked respondents to indicate whether their library had experienced an increase or decrease in staff development in the past five years.

**Table IX.** Change in staff development over the past five years

	n	%
Increased	39	72.2
Remained Stable	11	20.4
Decreased	0	0.0
Unsure	4	7.4
Total	54	100.0

A majority of respondents (72.2%) said that the amount of staff development activities have increased, while 20.4% of them said that the amount has remained stable. None of the responding library managers indicated that there had been a decrease in staff development during this period (7.4% “Unsure”). These results indicate that CPD and participation in LIS education have increased in this period for most academic libraries.

Respondents were asked to indicate the various strategies that are employed by their library to encourage or support participation in staff development activities. Responses were received from 47 of the libraries.

**Table X.** Strategies used to encourage/ support staff development (n=47)

	n	%
Travel costs	36	76.6
Accommodation costs	31	66.0
Daily sustenance allowance	30	63.8
Payment of attendance fees or registration	30	63.8
Paid time	26	55.3
Payment of university course fees	21	44.7
Enhanced opportunity for promotion	14	29.8
Time off for attending classes	10	21.3
Sabbatical/ professional development leave	7	14.9
Time off for study in distance education program/online	7	14.9

The responses to this question indicate that libraries are employing a number of strategies to encourage or support staff development. Those they are most widely used involve the library paying some of the costs associated with attendance, with over 60% of the respondents indicating that their library will be responsible for expenses related to travel, accommodation, daily sustenance or course fees/registration costs.

It is relevant to note that only 26 (55%) of the library managers indicated that their organisation would provide for paid time to undertake staff development. This suggests that staff of some libraries may sacrifice salary in order to participate in staff development activities (that is, they do it on their “own time”).

The provision of support for formal education noted earlier is also in evidence in the responses to this question, with 44.7% of the managers reporting that their library pays the associated fees and 21.3% indicating that they will be allowed to have “time off” in order to attend. There is again a ‘gap’ here, however, between the payment of fees and the provision of time, with staff of some libraries apparently attending formal course on their own time.

These responses can be compared to those received from the Australian-based neXus2 survey, where 100% of the responding university libraries reported that they provide for coverage of costs associated with travel, accommodation, course fees/ registrations, and paid time away from the workplace. Of the Australian libraries 80% provide a “Daily sustenance allowance”.

Given the resources that are directed towards staff development it is not unexpected that programs are frequently evaluated in order to ensure that they are providing benefit to an organisation. Respondents were therefore asked to indicate if their staff development program is evaluated.

**Table XI.** Organisation evaluates the strategic effectiveness of the staff development program

	n	%
Yes	35	53.8
No	22	33.8
Unsure	8	12.3
Total	65	100.0

Responses indicate that a majority (53.8%) of the libraries evaluate the effectiveness of their staff development program, with the remainder either not using evaluation (33.8%) or being “Unsure” (12.3%). As Table III records, 41 of the libraries involved in the survey have a formal staff development program. It can therefore be assumed that of those libraries with a formal program, some 85.4% undertake an evaluation.

## Discussion and conclusion

In discussing the results of the related questionnaire survey of Indonesian academic library staff of their CPD activity it was reported that the “evidence . . . suggests that the CPD situation may be in quite a healthy state” (Maesaroh and Genoni, 2009, p. 535). This conclusion was based on results that revealed high rates of participation in a range of CPD activities. There were some troubling aspects of the questionnaire responses, however, with evidence that the participants in these CPD activities were critical of the *quality* of the learning they received, and they also expressed a high level of need for additional training across a variety of areas. It was also noted that there “appears to be an emphasis on workplace training and related activities in these responses as opposed to externally sourced CPD” (p. 532).

The results of the current survey also point to problems with CPD in Indonesian academic libraries. Some of these problems appear to be linked to the underdeveloped infrastructure for CPD as experienced in some libraries. It is for example, the case (Table III) that over 40% of the libraries surveyed either do not have a staff development plan or are unaware if they have such a plan. In addition some 42% of libraries (Table IV)—and likely more, as 7 libraries did not respond to this question—do not have a budget allocation for training. This suggests that even if training does occur in these libraries it is likely to be infrequent and low cost.

This evidence alone suggests that there is a not insignificant minority of these libraries for which CPD is a low priority. Concern about the state of CPD in Indonesia increases when the number of libraries reporting little or no access to key methods of CPD is considered (Table VI). This includes libraries reporting that they “Never” provide support for standard CPD activities such as “Attendance at continuing professional education events” (46.2%); “Orientation/ induction programs” (39.7%); “on-the-job training programs” (32.8%); “In-house short course with internal trainers” (21.9%); “External short courses” (27.3%); and “Attendances at conferences” (18.8%). While some of these options are high cost—requiring attendance fees, and possibly travel and accommodation costs—others are potentially low cost and with few administrative overheads. This strongly suggests that at least some libraries having little or no expectation of engaging with CPD, very likely as the result constrained budgets, small staff numbers, and inadequate management infrastructure. It hardly needs pointing out that in a library system stressed by chronic underfunding that the day-to-day service requirements will take priority over the medium or long-term development of staff.

While it is a subject that would benefit from further investigation, it also seems that some staff in Indonesian academic libraries may be bearing a considerable proportion of their CPD costs. This is a somewhat vexed issue, as it is reasonable that staff should contribute to some extent to the acquisition of new skills in the expectation that they may eventually use these skills to win promotion or positions in another organisation. It is apparent, however, that staff of some Indonesian academic libraries are required to pay for elements of their CPD that would be absorbed by an employer in other countries (Table X). In particular, the result that only just over half of the responding libraries provide “Paid time” for training would be a disincentive to many forms of CPD.

The encouraging element of the results is that a majority of the responding libraries (72.2%) indicated that CPD activity had increased in recent years (Table IX). This suggests that despite the various problems that beset staff development in Indonesia, that there has nonetheless been an improvement.

Finally, it should be noted that interpreting these questionnaire results is made more difficult by the number of missing responses to certain questions. While very few questions were addressed by all responding libraries, several questions (for example Tables V and IX) received unexpectedly low responses. It is open to speculation as to why this is the case, but may point to libraries with poor systems for managing their CPD simply having no view on the matters raised.

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