

Analysis of the Factors Constraining the Optimization of Library Management at SMK Miftahul Ulum Cimerak

Panisa Dwi Julian¹, Mahbubillah², Sahmidin³, Devi Silviana Dewi⁴

^{1,2,3,4}Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Tarbiyah Nahdlatul U Al-Farabi Pangandaran, Pangandaran, Indonesia

¹Email: fanisadwijulian@gmail.com,

²Email: mahbubillahabub@gmail.com,

³Email: kangsahmidin@gmail.com,

⁴Email: devisilviana@gmail.com

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Abstract (10 pt)

The school library should be an active learning resource center that supports the educational process. However, at SMK Miftahul Ulum Cimerak, the utilization of the library is still not optimal. This is due to various obstacles that affect the overall function and services of the library. This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques in the form of observation, interviews, and documentation. The research was conducted in April 2025 at SMK Miftahul Ulum Cimerak. The analysis results show that there are four main obstacles in library management, namely: (1) the absence of dedicated staff responsible for daily operations; (2) limited and irrelevant book collections; (3) inadequate library facilities; and (4) low student reading interest due to a lack of literacy programs and library promotions. Library management at SMK Miftahul Ulum Cimerak requires serious attention from various parties to improve the quality of services, including enhancing resources.

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1. Introduction

The school library is one of the important facilities in supporting the learning process and building a culture of literacy in the educational environment (Mansyur, Mohamammad, 2021). The existence of libraries is not only as a place to store books but also as a center for learning resources that should be able to foster reading interest and serve as a knowledge exploration space for students (Barowi, 2021). Sari (2018) mentions that libraries are not only related to books but also to the systems of storage, maintenance, and usage. School libraries are not just about gathering and storing library

materials, but with the existence of school libraries, it is hoped that students will gradually enjoy visiting the library and then develop a love for reading within themselves.

The organization of school libraries itself refers to Law Number 2 of 1989 concerning the National Education System. In article 35 of that law, it is stated that every educational unit in the school education path, whether organized by the government or by the community, must provide learning resources. Article 35 states that one of the very important learning resources, but not the only one, is the library, which must allow teachers and students to have the opportunity to expand and deepen their knowledge through reading books and other collections (Sari, 2018). However, with the development of information technology, there has been a significant change in the pattern of information access, especially among students. Mobile phones and other digital devices have now become the primary source of obtaining information, which has impacted the decline in students' interest in conventional libraries.

This condition also occurs at SMK Miftahul Ulum Cimerak, where the school library is rarely used by students. Based on initial observations, there are several main issues that lead to the low utilization of the library, including: the absence of a dedicated manager or librarian, a collection of books that is unappealing and outdated, and minimal integration of the library into the learning process. In addition, the high intensity of gadget usage among students also pushes physical book reading activities to the periphery. According to Rodin (2019) in (JASMINE, 2014), library management is an activity that organizes the systematics of the library carried out by the head librarian in determining individuals who are capable of carrying out tasks and responsibilities for the implementation of an institution so that the desired goals can be achieved effectively and efficiently.

However, at SMK MU, the management of the library still faces several obstacles, including the lack of book collections relevant to the latest curriculum, minimal supporting technology facilities such as computers and internet access, and the low

interest in reading among students which results in suboptimal use of the library. In addition, the limited number of library management staff also hinders optimal services to students and teachers. In this context, library management plays an important role. Good and innovative library management can be a strategy to attract students to use the library again. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct an in-depth study on the current condition of library management, the challenges faced, and the strategies that can be implemented to make the library relevant again in the digital era.

2. Material and Methods

This research uses qualitative research methods. According to the book (Sugiyono, 1967), the research is conducted on natural objects. Natural objects are those that develop as they are, not manipulated by the researcher, and the presence of the researcher does not affect the dynamics of the object. In qualitative research, the instrument is a person or human instrument, which is the researcher themselves. To obtain a broader and deeper understanding of the social situation being studied, the data collection technique is triangulation, which uses various data collection techniques in a combined/simultaneous manner. The data analysis conducted is inductive based on the facts found in the field and then constructed into hypotheses or theories. This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach, which aims to analyze the factors that hinder the optimization of library management at SMK Miftahul Ulum Cimerak.

The research was conducted at SMK Miftahul Ulum Cimerak, located at Jl. Raya Ciparanti No.182 Cibuluh Cimerak, Masawah Village, Cimerak District, Pangandaran Regency, West Java. This research was carried out in April 2025.

3. Results

Based on the results of observations and interviews, it is known that the researcher describes the factors that hinder the optimization of library management at SMK MU Cimerak:

1. The library management at SMK Miftahul Ulum Cimerak is currently not running optimally. The library does not have a dedicated manager responsible for the daily operations of the library. As a result, many library activities, such as book borrowing, collection recording, and cataloging, are done haphazardly or are not carried out systematically. Suhaemin and Arikunto (2013) state that the stages in library management consist of annual book procurement planning, organizing, implementation (procurement, processing, services, and development), as well as supervision conducted by the principal.

As we know, Ibrahim (2014) stated that in a library there is usually a librarian. The presence of the librarian is a manifestation of the execution of the most important function of the library, which is to attract more users to the library, assist users in searching for and utilizing all the information and facilities available in the library, inform about new information and facilities, foster interest in reading and learning, and reach all segments of society according to the respective objects of each library. Due to the importance of the library, a school or institution must establish good and orderly management so that the library can truly operate as it should. However, in practice in the field, library management has not been functioning well (Barowi, 2021).

2. The collection of books available is also quite limited, and most of them are old books that are less relevant to the latest curriculum needs or current student interests. The lack of a proper inventory system results in poor documentation of the number and types of book collections.

Kohar Ade (2003) stated that the library collection is one of the main factors in establishing a library, which is the "soul" of the library, including both printed and non-printed collections, such as digital formats, that can influence the development or decline of a library. If the library's collection of materials meets the desires of its visitors, then that library will always hold a place in the hearts of its patrons. Conversely, if the library lacks collection materials and does not meet the

expectations of visitors, it will gradually experience decline. According to Ade Kohar, the library collection includes various formats of materials in accordance with the developments and alternative needs of library users regarding information recording media (Jumady et al., 2022).

3. Then on the facilities side, the library space is less representative and has not been designed as a comfortable place for studying or reading. The library is also not equipped with information technology, such as computers, online catalogs, or digital borrowing services, which should support students' digital literacy needs in the modern era.

This aligns with Fitri Mutia's opinion (2004) regarding facilities and infrastructure that the rapid development of libraries must be supported by the provision of public spaces as discussion areas for its users; therefore, the room needs to be equipped with amenities such as air conditioning (AC), LCD, a comfortable and tidy space, organized and accessible bookshelves, comfortable reading areas, a complete and up-to-date collection of books, and a mini theater aimed at enhancing user comfort when utilizing the services. The library needs to consider the arrangement of equipment; this is intended so that the existing equipment can be easily moved according to needs and the availability of space (Jumady et al., 2022).

4. The low interest in reading among students also poses its own challenges. Most students prefer accessing information through smartphones rather than reading physical books in the library. Moreover, there are no active school literacy programs or library promotion activities to enhance the reading culture among students.

Slameto (1995:180) states that interest is a feeling of preference and curiosity toward something or an activity, without anyone prompting. Interest is essentially the acceptance of a relationship between oneself and something outside of oneself. The stronger or closer that relationship, the greater the interest. The same applies to reading interest; it is something that can drive the emergence of reading behavior in someone. It can be shaped, change to strengthen, weaken, or even completely

disappear. Essentially, schools are responsible for fostering reading interest among students, as that is where students' creativity will emerge. Schools must teach children to think through a learning culture that emphasizes understanding the material. Meanwhile, the library plays a crucial role in supporting this learning process.

An appealing library for users can indirectly encourage them to visit the library again, thus positively impacting and enhancing students' reading interest. In fostering reading interest and proving that a library is not just a reading place but has evolved into a place for students to develop their skills and talents, there is also a need for opportunities that accommodate students' desires to showcase the abilities they have trained and developed through the library (Rahadian et al., 2014)

Overall, this condition indicates that library management at SMK Miftahul Ulum Cimerak requires serious attention, both in terms of human resources, facilities, collections, and literacy development programs.

4. Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the library management at SMK Miftahul Ulum Cimerak has not been running optimally due to several inhibiting factors related to human resources, collection development, facilities, and student literacy culture. These results reinforce previous studies which argue that effective library management requires integrated planning, organizing, implementation, and supervision (Suhaemin & Arikunto, 2013). However, the absence of a dedicated library manager at SMK Miftahul Ulum Cimerak has led to unsystematic operations, such as irregular book lending, incomplete cataloging, and poor collection documentation. This condition contradicts Ibrahim's (2014) assertion that librarians play a central role in facilitating user access to information, fostering reading interest, and ensuring the library functions according to its educational purpose. When this role is absent, as observed in the current study, the library fails to fully support the academic environment.

In addition to human resource issues, the limited and outdated book collection further hinders library optimization. The majority of available books do not align with current curriculum standards or students' information needs, resulting in low utilization. According to Kohar Ade (2003), library collections are the "soul" of a library, fundamentally determining its ability to attract and maintain users. A poor or outdated collection inevitably reduces the library's relevance, causing it to experience decline (Jumady et al., 2022). The findings of this study are consistent with this theoretical perspective, as students at SMK Miftahul Ulum Cimerak tend to avoid using the library due to the lack of updated and engaging materials.

Facility-related constraints also significantly affect library performance. The library space at SMK Miftahul Ulum Cimerak is less representative, lacks comfort, and is not equipped with information technology tools such as computers, digital catalogs, or internet access. These findings align with Fitri Mutia's (2004) view that modern libraries must provide supportive physical environments equipped with ICT tools to enhance user comfort and functionality. Inadequate facilities limit the library's ability to meet the digital literacy needs of students in the current technological era, thereby reducing their motivation to utilize library services.

Another challenge identified in this study is the low reading interest among students. Most students prefer accessing information via smartphones rather than physical books, indicating a shift in information consumption behavior. According to Slameto (1995), interest is shaped by personal preference and is influenced by one's interaction with an activity or environment. Without supportive literacy programs or attractive library services, students' reading interest tends to weaken. The absence of school-based literacy initiatives and library promotion activities at SMK Miftahul Ulum Cimerak contributes to the declining reading culture. This finding is consistent with Rahadian et al. (2014), who emphasize that an appealing library environment can encourage repeated visits and strengthen students' reading motivation. Libraries should

also be developed as creative spaces that accommodate students' talents, not merely as reading rooms.

Overall, the results of this study highlight the urgent need for comprehensive improvement in library management at SMK Miftahul Ulum Cimerak. These improvements should include appointing qualified library personnel, updating and enriching the book collection, enhancing facilities—including digital infrastructure—and implementing structured literacy programs. Without addressing these interconnected factors, the library will remain unable to perform its essential role in supporting learning, fostering students' reading interest, and contributing to the overall quality of education.

5. Conclusion

Based on the results of observations and interviews, it can be concluded that the library management at SMK Miftahul Ulum Cimerak still faces various significant challenges. First, library management has not been functioning optimally due to the absence of a dedicated librarian who is fully responsible. Second, the available book collection is limited and not relevant to the latest curriculum needs, and it has not been systematically documented.

Third, the library facilities are inadequate to create a comfortable learning atmosphere and are not supported by relevant information technology in line with the demands of the digital era. Fourth, the low interest in reading among students presents a major challenge, which is exacerbated by the absence of continuous literacy programs and library promotions. Overall, the library of SMK Miftahul Ulum Cimerak requires comprehensive improvements in terms of human resources, collections, facilities, and literacy enhancement strategies to function optimally as a effective learning resource center.

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