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Power Relation in University Electronic Library: Its Implication and Practice

I Putu Suhartika[1], I Wayan Ardika[2], I Ketut Ardhana[3], I Nengah Punia[4]

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Hegemony;

Commodification;

Mediation;

Abstract

The electronic library presents the power relation phenomena related to the implication and practice of the relation. The purpose of this research is to describe the implication and practice of power relations in university electronic libraries in accordance with the library aspects that are affected by the power relation. This paper applied a qualitative descriptive method with a cultural studies perspective. It uses Foucault's theory of power relation and is also supported by Derrida's theory of deconstruction and Gramsci's hegemony. Based on observation on the practice of power relation which is supported by interview data, it is known that power relations are closely related to disruption of electronic libraries which implies gaps and marginalization of libraries, hegemony, mediatization, commodification, and libraries as virtual spaces. It is, therefore, concluded the practice of power relations in university electronic libraries in Bali has both positive and negative impacts on the library.

1. Introduction

One of the products with regard to the actor's relationship in libraries is the electronic library. Deb dan Kar (2005) stated that electronic library may be defined as a system that is accessible from anywhere via the Internet, to deliver knowledge directly to its users, without being confiied to the contents of a physical library nor by being caught in a Web of unorganized, unmanaged

[1] *Doctor Candidate, Udayana University, Denpasar, Indonesia, Email: suhartika@unud.ac.id*
[2] *Professor of Archaelogy, Udayana University, Denpasar, Indonesia, Email: ardikawayan52@gmail.com*
[3] *Professor of History, Udayana University, Denpasar, Indonesia, Email: phejepsdrlipi@yahoo.com*
[4] *Doctor of Sociology, Udayana University, Denpasar, Indonesia, Email: negah_puniah@yahoo.com*

information. Akparobore (2019) stated that electronic information processing has been used in business processes for more than four decades and has evolved through several identifiable phases. An electronic library is a library where some or all of the library's holdings are available in electronic format, and library services via the Internet so that users can access them remotely (onwuchekwa and Jegede, 2011). Electronic library can integrate various manual activities into an automated system which is known as library automation such as circulation, cataloging, acquisition, serial control, and others. Library automation refers to the use of computers, associated with peripheral media like magnetic tapes, disks, optical media etc. and utilization of computer-based product and services within the performance of all style of library functions and operation (Gavit, 2019).

Based on the definitions above, it can be said that electronic libraries emphasize on the provision of information services through the migration of collections to digital and electronic forms using internet networks and library automation systems. Therefore, the electronic library can eliminate the physical limits of data storage, access, retrieval and dissemination of information to users around the world by using the internet network. The term of electronic library has the same meaning as digital library and virtual library (Wahono, 2003). However, the term often used is digital library. The term digital library or virtual library is used interchangeably with the term electronic library (Santoso, 2012). Suhartika (2018) said that an electronic library involves four main components, namely place, people, information systems, and activities as shown in Figure 1 the following.

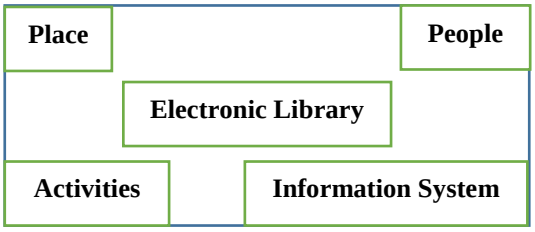


Figure 1 Electronic Library Components

Figure 1 indicated people are actors consisting internal and external actors from the library. Electronic library activities are actions which done by actors to achieve goals. Meanwhile, the electronic library system is an application consisting of software and databases (metadata, e-book, e-journal). Therefore, people are very important actors in the electronic library. They can use knowledge to make power relation in the library.

Power is the ability to influence, regulate the thoughts or will, and behavior of others (Ardika et al., 2018; Latupeirissa et al., 2019; Ziyoda, 2020). Power is always practiced by people through social activities. It is exercised through sources of power such as the police, economy, politics, law, ideology and tradition. Power is an abstract concept, but it is very influential in our lives (Wareing, 2007). Power can lead to a person's obedience. Kähkönen (2014) stated that power provides several definitions of power that are associated with sociological theory or social exchange theory, namely to get someone to do something, they would not do, the ability to impose one's will on others, and power in structural power-determining networks. Thus, the meaning of power is always implied in every action at every level of social relations. However, Foucault & Kritzman (2013) provides a different understanding of power, where power is not placed in a scope or position related to one another, but rather on individuals or subjects in social (Faucault, 1980). Michel Foucault stated that power is everywhere so that a person is never out of power (Lynch, 1998). Foucault considered science as a tool for human control over humans (Lubis, 2004).

The practice of power relation can produce new objects of knowledge that create the influence of power. The influence is not only obtained through one's position but also through the mastery of certain knowledge. Power could not be carried out without knowledge, and the knowledge should

produce the power. (Sarup, 2003). Knowledge is a human product that is always in the sphere of power. Knowledge is always embedded in socially formed power, by creating truths that are not neutral in nature but adapted to the interests of social power. The practice of power relation in university electronic library places knowledge as the power of the actor. The knowledge is attached directly to the actor, so that the actor has power over their knowledge.

The practice of power relation in electronic university library also presents deconstruction. The deconstruction can reveal hidden ideologies of the actors in the practice of power relation. The concept of deconstruction is a resistance to the concept of binary opposition, where the concept compares only two meanings such as black and white, male and female, and the like. Deconstruction always dismantles established meanings. These meanings are still temporary and can still be debated. Therefore, the deconstruction focuses "deconstruction of logocentrism" (Ritzer, 2014). The practice of power relations also has implications for libraries, librarians and users.

Previous studies in power relation applied in specific field have been conducted. Some of them are power relation in governor election (Priyanto 2017), community resistance (Sardi, 2017), modern library (Radford, 1992), library management (Laugu, 2015), library commodification (Irawati, 2018) However, in this study, the practice of power relation was observed from actor relation in the stages of electronic library development with using Foucault's theory. The practice was associated with knowledge and power of the actor. The practice also presented the ideology of the actor and the form of power relation. Besides this, the paper also observed the implication of power relation to the library and users. The problem raised in this paper was described in two questions: how is the practice of power relation seen from the form, process, and ideology of the actors? And, what are the implications of power relation on the electronic universty libraries? In other words, this paper observed and discussed the the practice of power relation and its implication in university electronic libraries.

2. Materials and Methods

In order to observe the practice of power relation in electronic university libraries in Bali, the data used in this paper were mostly taken from interview and online media. The interviews were conducted with library actors in a semi-structured manner. This study uses purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling is a sampling technique used by researchers if the researcher has certain considerations in taking the sample (Data & Silverman,2011). Therefore, this paper used a qualitative descriptive method with cultural studies perspectives. Cultural studies is definitively the study of culture on the practice of signification of representation, by exploring the formation of meaning in various contexts (Kumbara, 2020). The genealogy method developed by Michel Foucault is a concept in the cultural studies. The concept seeks to reveal the relationship among social practices, knowledge, and power relation. This method focuses on power and knowledge relation. There is a reciprocal relationship between them. Knowledge creates power, and on the other hand power can produce knowledge. Genealogy method tries to describe all hidden or invisible power occurred in a discourse.

The deconstruction method introduced by Jacques Derrida is an analytical model that dismantle various dominant and hegemonic structures without destructing the existing elements. Derrida introduced some terms in 'deconstruction', such as' gram, difference, and dissemination. He presupposed a static structurally open space into a dynamic one which is not limited by the relation between the signifier and the signified. The concept of Derrida's deconstruction is a resistance to the concept of binary opposition which is associated with established meaning.

3. Results and Discussions

The results of the study show that mostly the practice of power relations in the electronic library of universities in Bali uses the knowledge of actors. However, in certain cases, this practice presents the structural power of the actors. Therefore, the power relations are in the form of equality, domination, negotiation, and hegemony. Power relations in the form of equality and negotiation are shown by all actors when they make relationships based on their knowledge. The form of dominance was shown by the Vice Chancellor I when he rejected the proposal for procurement of collections from the head of the library. Power relations in the form of hegemony are shown by programmers to system users. Thus, it can be said that not all of the power relations in Foucault's perspective can be implemented in this study, considering that power relations are also based on the structural power of actors. The practice of power relations in the electronic library plays with various actor ideologies. The ideologies are librarian, free, capitalist, and open source. The practice of power relations also has implications for libraries and users. The implications are inequality, marginalization, hegemony, mediatization and commodification of libraries.

Gap and Marginalization of Library

The internet has become the main source of universities. The results show that the use of the internet by students has increased student academic confidence, academic independence and student-lecturer connection, but the use of the internet by these students has increased gaps in expert-lecturer relationships and reference relationships (Alshahrani, 2017: 1)

In this regards, the electronic library creates a gap between users and librarians or libraries. Previously, users came directly to the library and asked the librarian how to find information in the library. The users follow the librarian's instructions because they consider librarians to be experts in their fields. However, nowadays users communicate through the system without face-to-face contact with the librarian. If librarians fail to do their creativity they will gradually be left behind by the library users. Therefore, it can lead to marginalization of libraries, as the informant said:

> *For me, the electronic library really helps me in doing my college assignments, because it's easier to find, and the results are more accurate (Interview, October 5, 2020)*

The statement above showed that he strongly believed in the importance of electronic libraries so that it raises his confidence and independence. Electronic libraries provide various facilities that support the openness in the fields of access, content, archives, research, links, and references, as stated by the librarian as follows:

> *Our service becomes global by providing links to various sources of useful information for reference material, thus providing easy access for users, there is also digital content that can be downloaded at any time by users (Interview, March 8, 2021)*

From the statements, it can be seen that the power relations that produce electronic libraries have implications for libraries, librarians, library users, and collections in the form of gaps and marginalization.

Programmer's Hegemony to Users

The practice of power relations in electronic libraries presented powerful groups exercising social authority through approval or consensus mechanisms. The users implemented the system voluntarily and followed the instructions of the programmer as conveyed by librarian as folows:

> *Yes, we definitely always use it considering that the system is very helpful in carrying out library activities (Interview, March 8, 2021)*

The same statement was also conveyed by other librarian as follows:

Yes, yes, of course, considering that nowadays, more works are done with the system, so we always use the system here (Interview, July 23, 2020)

The statements of the two librarians above indicated that librarians use the electronic library system consciously considering that the system provides convenience in doing their work. The system can support library operations optimally. Seen from the perspective of Gramsci's hegemony, the users are subordinate social groups who voluntarily agree to the hegemonic group. Thus, here we can see that power relation based on intellectual leadership accepted by the users. Gramsci's concept of hegemony means, in part, that people from non-exploiting classes should give society's approval to the philosophy of praxis (Bocock, 2007). The concept of hegemony was first produced in Russia in 1880 by a Russian Marxist, Plekanov (Patria, 2015).

The practice of power relation in university electronic libraries affected information seeking behavior. Information seeking behavior is a broad term, which involves a set of actions that an individual takes to express information needs, seek information, evaluate and select information, and finally uses this information to satisfy his/her information needs (Singh, 2015). The users search for information in the system according to their needs, as said by student below:

I access the electronic library system of my own will, I like to use it because it provides many choices of information that can be accessed anytime and anywhere (interview, February 6, 2021)

The statement above shows that the information seeking behavior involves students' personal reasons. Information seeking behavior involves personal reasons for looking for information, the type of information being searched for, and how to find the source of the information needed (Bhattacharjee, 2014). From this statement, it can be said that users visit the library not only to find information, but also to make social relations with users and other people virtually. Such a tendency is called a 'spetacle' (Debord, 2002: 7).

Library Mediation

The practice of power relations in university electronic libraries in Bali have caused the onslaught of various media technologies against the users and the librarians. They are very dependent on the media technology which are called mediatization, namely the influence of media technology on users (Hjarvard, 2008: 114) and (Hepp, 2013: 6). Mediatization of university electronic libraries in Bali is carried out through various media such as library websites, social media and so on as shown in Table 1 below:

No	Media	Unud	Undiksha	ISI	Unmas	Stikom
1	Library website	√	√	√	√	√
2	Facebook	√	√		√	√
3	Instagram	√			√	
4	Youtube	√	√			
5	Foursquare		√		√	√
6	Blogspot		√			
	Total	4	5	1	4	3

Table 1 shows that mediation of university electronic libraries in Bali is carried out through 6 (six) types of media, namely library websites, Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, Foursquare and Blogspot. Of all these media, the library website is the main media for university libraries in Bali in visualizing the existence of the library. Some examples of these media are shown in Figure 2 below:

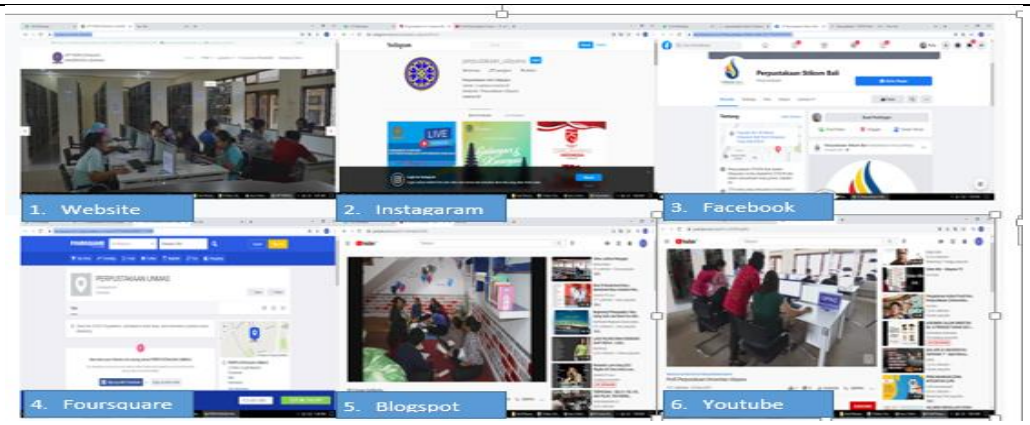


Figure 2. Visualization Media of University Electronic Library in Bali

Figure 2 above shows that the university electronic library in Bali shows its existence to users through various media, including social media. The media is a sign that can connect the library with the users, so that communication between the two parties is still carried out virtually. Therefore, mediatization of libraries can reach wider users, considering the presence of electronic library websites can reach global users. The emergence of social media in the global network is increasingly expanding the reach of users so that the existence of libraries is increasingly felt by the users. Libraries are finally no longer public spaces for library institutions, but public spaces throughout the world.

Library Commodification

Implication of power relation in university electronic library in Bali is library commodification. Commodities are basically everything that is intended to be exchanged. Thus, all things in electronic libraries that have a positive impact to the users are called library commodification. Commodification is always closely related to capitalism (Barker, 2014: 41), where objects, qualities, and signs are transformed into commodities or goods or services that have values in the market. Mosco (2009) stated that commodification as the process of converting goods and services, including communications into commodities. Furthermore, Mosco (2009) classifies commodification into 3 (three) types, namely content, audience, and labor commodification. Referring to the Mosco commodification theory, electronic library components can cause library commodification. These components are electronic collections such as e-books, e-journals, buildings or rooms, facilities, infrastructure and the actors involved in the development of electronic libraries, as stated by the library user as follows:

For example, we are presenting in our class, we are discussing about the book, you just click a link to the book in the library, and you can directly read the page, all students can read it right away, everyone is connected to the internet, it makes it easier for me to teach (Interview March 2, 2021)

The informant stated that electronic collections are worth more than printed collections considering that electronic collections have several advantages such as being able to be read anywhere and anytime, efficient, not requiring a special place, safe and undamaged, easy to back up, comfortable, environmentally friendly and can be marked as a reminder for readers. Therefore, the electronic collection is part of the content commodification that emphasizes on the value or advantages of the content. Electronic libraries are the result of the relationship between actors in the libraries. The actor makes the library worth more than the previous library. According to Mosco's perspective, the electronic library actor is a form of worker commodification. Therefore, the

practice of power relation in university electronic libraries in Bali presented library commodification.

Library as Virtual Spaces

The power relations in university electronic libraries in Bali caused the libraries considered as not only computer-based libraries, but also as a social practice space for actors. The electronic library as a cyberspace allows all groups to access it freely without being limited by the demographics of its users. Cyberspace is a world where people have no connection at all with real space, as said by the informant as follows:

..., I just commented that I have friends and idols, I see stories more often, because I rarely go out (Interview February 6, 2021)

Cyberspace allows events in the real world because the space is part of a social product that accommodates social phenomena in society as stated by the user as follows:

Showing off social media is made to show off, looking for entertainment, searching but not watching. There are people who share from social media. I watch information from the social media, not from television (Interview March 2, 2021)

Space does not only refer to decision-making arena and forum for action, but also includes other spaces that are seen as opportunities where people can act to influence potential policies or decisions (Gaventa, 2007; Pantazidou, 2012). In this regard, the cyber space is a duplication of real world life. However, cyberspace often presents falsehoods where the events that are conveyed are not necessarily like the reality. According to description above, it is said that the power relation can create library as cyber or virtual space.

4. Conclusion

The practice of power relations in university electronic libraries in Bali can be explained through Foucault's perspective. The practice starts from the librarian's knowledge of electronic libraries. In this case, the head of the library conveys this knowledge to various relevant actors, and other actors respond to this knowledge in various ways. This is where Foucault's theory works, where knowledge begins to produce power. Therefore, the development of university electronic libraries in Bali raises the link between knowledge and the power that operate behind it. There are also actor ideologies that play in the practice of power relation, such as librarian, open source, free, and capitalist ideologies. These ideologies can affect the actor's relationship.

The practice of power relations in university electronic libraries in Bali has various forms of power which are translated into forms of equality, collaboration, domination, negotiation, and hegemony. Overall, the form of power relations is a network that supports and protects the actors. The practice also has implications for libraries, librarians, and users in the form of inequality, marginalization, hegemony, commodification and mediation of libraries. Therefore, the practice of power relations has positive and negative implications for libraries.

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