Knowledge Preservation to Cultivate Cultural Literacy at Museums

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Abstract

One important thing organizations such as museums do in the information age is to preserve accurate knowledge. Knowledge preservation is also important because it can help to address the cultural literacy challenges of UNESCO in relation to its Sustainable Development Goals program. The museum makes increased cultural literacy possible by serving as an information institution which collects the history of Indonesia. The method used for this study is descriptive research with literature study, where the data was obtained through analysis of the museum website. Information about the process of knowledge preservation was obtained from the IAEA using identification, capture, generation or creation, processing and transformation, storage, search and retrieval, representation, transfer and exchange, and maintenance and renewal. The preservation of knowledge in the museum is comprehensive enough to contribute fully to the increase of cultural literacy in Indonesia.

Keywords—cultural literacy, museum, preservation of knowledge, UNESCO

1. Introduction

In the current information age, society’s need for knowledge that develops dynamically is increasing. The organization is capturing and collecting as much information as it can. As we now know, information has become a main goal of the organization. The information that the organization seeks to collect becomes knowledge for the organization itself. There are two types of knowledge: explicit and tacit.

Explicit knowledge is written knowledge. Explicit knowledge is easier to share with others because it can be distributed in the form of reports, books, and so on. In addition to being easy to transfer, explicit knowledge is also easy to preserve. Tacit knowledge, on the other hand, is unwritten information that is owned by members of an organization. Tacit knowledge is not easy to write down because is inside the human mind. Often, people understand something but do not find it easy to put into words; therefore, it is much harder to share and preserve. The challenge that organizations face is how to collect all types of knowledge, both explicit and tacit.

Once collected, knowledge then needs to be preserved by the organization so that it is not easily lost. Preservation of knowledge can also be seen as a tribute to organization members because it contributes to improving knowledge about the organization’s history. Explicit and tacit knowledge can be preserved by applying that knowledge to the organization's day-to-day activities. In addition to preserving knowledge, an organization must also actively facilitate members of the organization to continue to share their knowledge, so that the organization’s information is always being updated and corrected.

Once the organization owns accurate information, then there is a need for educating others and socializing the new information with the rest of the community. The goal is for as little information as possible to be incorrect or spread by hoax. When this happens, UNESCO can respond because it owns the main repositories of education, science, social sciences, human culture, and communication and information. This idea will be examined further in this study.

The UNESCO community is trying to create information literacy programs so that countries can obtain information according to their needs. In a ranking of the world's most literate nations, Indonesia is in 60th place out of 61 countries. This position is two rankings below Botswana. Thailand is ranked 59th; Malaysia is 53rd, and Singapore is in 36th place (https://webcapp.ccsu.edu/?news=1767&data). This data is proof that the level of information literacy in Indonesia is very low. This does not mean that this must be a final assessment; Indonesia should use this data as a challenge to prove that it can improve its information literacy levels.
In fact, increased information literacy in Indonesia has already begun to be seen with the emergence of various literacy movements that help the government in the effort to improve community literacy. However, the literacy improvement should not be the government’s responsibility alone; the entire organization is responsible for it. This effort defines the main goal of information institutions. In 2017, UNESCO established six basic literatures to be mastered, including literature literacy, numerical literacy, financial literacy, scientific literacy, information literacy, and cultural and civic literacy.

The six basic literacy programs of UNESCO are also concerned with the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) program and its proclaimed sustainable development objectives. In the SDG program, there are 17 agreed-upon goals, and one of them is quality education. The purpose of quality education is to ensure decent, inclusive, and lifelong learning opportunities for all. One of the targets to be achieved by 2030 is to ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, and lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, the promotion of a culture of peace and nonviolence, global citizenship, and an appreciation of cultural diversity and cultural contribution to sustainable development.

In this study, the author approaches cultural literacy by examining how to preserve and disseminate Indonesian culture to the community through the museum. As an information institution, museums have a great deal of information about historical objects that should be presented and disseminated to the public. Historical objects themselves also need to be preserved; these can be physical historical objects or historical information that needs preservation so that people can learn about what cultural products were produced by previous communities and the meaning and purpose of what is contained therein.

Based on data compiled by the Association of Indonesian Museums (AMI) in 2016, there are as many as 428 museums in Indonesia. The list consists of public and specialty museums. The availability of many museums in Indonesia can certainly help in increasing cultural literacy and cultural preservation. Therefore, activities related to learning about cultural literacy and cultural preservation need to be held, and they need to be open to community participation, not reserved for museum organization members only. In this way, the community can also have a sense of responsibility in maintaining the culture of Indonesia.

2. Literature Review

Preservation of Knowledge

According to the IAEA, the preservation of knowledge is a process of maintaining information systems and organizational capabilities that protect and retain perceptions, actions, and experiences over time and secure the possibility of future retreats. According to Romhardt in Agrifoglio (2015), knowledge preservation is widely recognized as the process of selection, storage, and actualization of organizational knowledge.

According to the IAEA, the process of knowledge preservation includes:

a. Identification - the process of seeing whether the knowledge can be acquired, applied, processed, and maintained by the organization.

b. Capture - the process of capturing data, information or knowledge that is appropriate to the scope of the organization. The data, information and knowledge captured are obtained from internal or external sources, in tacit or explicit form. This is done to find out what information is useful for the sustainability of the organization.

c. Creation - the process of creating new information or knowledge that has been adapted to the goals of the organization. Creation of knowledge can be presented in various forms, including written, video, or audio visual, all of which help facilitate the distribution of knowledge.

d. Processing and transformation - the process of sorting, filtering, organizing, simplifying, compiling, interpreting, correlating, or manipulating data, information, or knowledge into additional value-added forms, utilities, or meanings. An organization can also create this knowledge in a way that allows it to be discussed with members of the organization, because it is possible for additional information or knowledge to result, in turn enriching the organization’s knowledge.

e. Storage - the process of safeguarding knowledge that has been created previously. At this time, the storage of information and knowledge can be done in both printed and non-printed forms. All the stored knowledge must then be secured in a safe and damage-free place. The importance of where the knowledge is stored is that it is a valuable asset, so there is an obligation for the organization to save and protect it. Storage is not only limited to media; it can also be related to human resources. Human beings are assets that bring empowering knowledge to an organization.

f. Searching and retrieval - the process of facilitating location and access to data, information, or knowledge in the organizational knowledge base. Search and
retrieval of information and knowledge at this time is mostly done online. In this regard, the organization must also provide the appropriate tools to its members to access the information.

g. Representation – the process of enhancing the understanding, comprehension or presentation of conceptual data, information, or knowledge through audio and visual means.

h. Transfers and exchanges – the process of facilitating the sharing of data, information, or knowledge. This can apply to silent, implicit or explicit knowledge. For example, explicit knowledge may involve data exchanged between databases. Tacit knowledge is the sharing of knowledge between individuals or groups of people, either directly or indirectly.

i. Maintenance and renewal – these are processes that help maintain the organizational knowledge base. Because knowledge is contextual, its accuracy or completeness may change over time. There are also many factors that may deteriorate or decrease the quantity, value, or quality of data, information, and knowledge over time. This process may be human-centered in terms of tacit knowledge, or include methods and tools for tracking and managing currency data, documents, drawings, software codes, procedures, etc., or updating and recording appropriate changes.

**Literacy**

In Hirsch (1989), literacy was first defined by UNESCO as the ability to read and write a simple letter. According to Merriam-Webster’s online dictionary, the word literacy comes from the Latin terms 'literature' and the English 'letter'. Literacy includes the ability to read and write. But more than that, the meaning of literacy also includes visual literacy which means “the ability to recognize and understand ideas that are presented visually (scene, video, image).” The Education Development Center (EDC) states that literacy is more all-encompassing, however. To the EDC, literacy is the ability of an individual to use all the potential and skills he possesses to understand and know more about life.

A work group on Information Competence in Spitzer (1998) defined information literacy as the ability to find, evaluate, use and communicate information in all forms. The expansion of the meaning of information to include literacy is now causing the public to be required to access the information in circulation in accordance with their needs. The American Library Association writes that information literacy describes when one is able to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to effectively search for, evaluate, and use it. Kulthau in Martin (2006: 83) claimed that students need to learn to build meaning from wide and different sources of information using an inquiry process approach to learning. Being able to construct meaning can also be seen as the need to create understanding within a diverse and incoherent world of information, and the main tool for meeting this need is information literacy.

**Museum**

The museum is one place used to store cultural heritage. According to Government Regulation No. 66 of 2015, museums are institutions that serve to protect, develop, and utilize collections by allowing the public to access them. Museum collections can include cultural or heritage objects, buildings, or structures that provide material proof of history, religion, culture, technology, and tourism. Government Regulation Number 66 of 2015, museum Article 2 states that in carrying out its activities, the museum’s task is to assess items and provide education about them, resulting in pleasure for individuals as they learn.

According to the International Council of Museums (ICOM), museums are non-profit and permanent institutions serving and open to the public whose job it is to acquire, preserve, research, communicate, and demonstrate intangible human and environmental heritage and environment for the purpose of education, learning, and happiness.

ICOM’s ethical code is:

1) Museums preserve, interpret, and promote the natural heritage and culture of humanity.

2) Museums believe in the benefits of society and its development.

3) Museums house the main evidence for building and advancing knowledge.

4) Museums provide an opportunity for appreciation, understanding and promotion of cultural and natural heritage.

5) A museum’s resources provide opportunities for other public services and benefits.

6) A museum works in close collaboration with the communities from which their collection comes as well as whom they serve.

7) The museum operates legally.

8) The museum operates professionally.

According to Mazrui in Barker (2013: 3), cultural heritage is a force in human affairs, so much so that it is worth including the outline of the Mazrui manuscripts of the seven functions of culture in world affairs. First, he suggests that culture contributes to the formation of perception and cognition of experience; second, culture encourages human motivation; third, it
provides an evaluative framework for what is considered good or bad, or moral or immoral; fourth and foremost, he identifies how culture provides a sense of identity, and this can manifest as a unifying or divisive force in world affairs; fifth, he considers culture to be a mode of communication expressed through art, music, and ideas; sixth, he considers culture as providing the basis for the definition of social stratification (rank, class, status); and seventh, he considers culture to be a system of production and consumption.

According to Ambrose (2012), a museum can create learning activities that can be held within the museum gallery or conducted outside the museum building. Inside the museum, learning can happen through various ways:

1. Contact schools
Museums can work together with neighborhood schools to schedule school visits to museums. School visits to museums are evidence that the museum can also play an active role in promoting itself and approaching the community. Targeting schools is effective because students are the next generation and should be introduced to museums as part of their early education. Children need to see the true meaning for museums, which are not lonely and spooky places that store historic objects. More than that, museums are a center for knowledge that can help preserve a country’s culture.

2. Learning materials
Museums can create learning materials for schools according to a theme. Museums can provide assistance in teaching and learning activities at schools as well, such as in art or history classes. Learning materials can also be created out of replica collections or special facilities where visitors can try things out themselves. This allows museum visitors to feel how a collection works; for example, batik or ceramic making tools, how to make kites, custom tribal clothing facilities, and many other ways. Activities can be repeated, and in addition to teaching classes at schools, the museum can promote itself, with the aim of encouraging students to visit museums more often.

3. Plan to visit the museum
The museum can initiate planning for visitors to come by arranging pickups for individuals, schools, organizations, or communities. Any of these has the potential to contribute to the museum as well. This is evidence of the museum actively participating with the community, rather than passively waiting for visitors.

4. The museum study room
The museum provides a study room dedicated to museum activities such as socialization, talk shows, seminars, or training for visitors.

5. School visits
When schools contact the museum, school visits can be scheduled. School visits are in fact a major milestone for museum visitors. It is undeniable that a school visit is one of the most effective ways to get students to visit the museum.

6. Follow-up work
Follow-up work is done by the museum after organizing events or museum activities for visitors. The events can be training in writing history, for example, or experiencing drama, dance and traditional music as visitor entertainment. These activities can be followed up on in a series of competitions or special events managed by the museum. Events held by the museum are oriented toward and add to cultural literacy for visitors.

In addition to learning inside the museum gallery, Ambrose (2012) also provides learning strategies for outside the museum, such as:

1. School loan services
School loan services can be done through a museum program, where the museum carries some collections around to the schools. Selection of these schools can be done by listing which schools have not been to visit the museum yet. Because it is possible that some students in the school have never had the opportunity to visit the museum due to school schedules or constrained transportation funding, this option helps reach more people.

With a school loan service, the museum can hold a simple exhibition in the school environment to introduce the museum collection. The museum can also show other collections from the museum gallery that have been digitized, to continue to conduct effective socialization of the museum collection among the community.

2. Mobile services
The mobile museum service is similar to the school loan service through its organization of a mobile museum program.

3. Speak at schools
Another form of socialization for the museum to use in the community is speaking at school. This allows the museum to promote the museum collections and encourage students to come visit with their families.

4. Kids club and leisure activities
Kids club and leisure activities can be scheduled by the museum by providing special resources for children visiting the museum during school breaks. It is also possible to create a special club for the children of museum lovers. This activity can designate children as pioneers or ambassadors of the museum who then invite other friends to visit the museum. Being an ambassador of the museum is a position of prestige for students. Club activities can also include holding batik classes, making masks, making sculptures, modeling custom stone, dance and so forth.

5. Special events

Special events include contributing actively in activities conducted by outsiders of the museum. For example, the museum could display a collection for the celebration of the city’s anniversary, or celebrate the anniversary of the museum itself by inviting various communities to participate in celebrating the event.

6. Establish Learning Outcomes

Establishing learning outcomes can occur at events or activities where the museum awards a certificate of appreciation to the community or students who excel. Indirectly, this certificate is an added value for the individual, either for the interest of adding the number of achievements, scholarship requirements, or requirements to register as a tourism ambassador.

3. Methods

This study used descriptive research from literature study. Descriptive research is a method that describes existing phenomena from the past or present. In this study, we see the agenda of activities undertaken by the museum for visitors, whether the activity is associated with increasing cultural literacy or not.

Library study is used to trace information through museum websites or blogspots from the agenda of activities conducted this year. This activity is done with the purpose of getting more detailed data about the activities. In this case, the blogspots were used because a website was not available, so the data was obtained by surfing using articles on blogspots written by others about the museum. The written article is accompanied by pictures of museum collections used by the author in conducting analysis on this research.

4. Results and Discussion

Based on the results of the analysis, we can explain how the museum contributes to the preservation of knowledge and growing cultural literacy. The following describes this study’s results:

1. Identify

We already know that a museum is one of the information institutions that store a great deal of historical information. Based on Government Regulation No. 66 of 2015, the museum is divided into two forms: public museums and special museums. Public museums have collections of common objects, such as an Indonesian national museum that has a collection of archeology (prehistoric objects), ethnography (cultural results of a region), geography (map, globe), ceramics, numismatika (currency) and heraldica. As one of Indonesia’s public museums, Mpu Tantular’s collection consists of collections of philology (ancient manuscripts), collections of fine arts (carvings or paintings), and a collection of technological items (the results of technological developments). There are also many special museums in Indonesia; for example, the tsunami museum in Aceh, which has the collection of photographs from and a replica of a tsunami event. Museum Angkut in Batu has a collection of vehicles from around the world. Museum Bank Indonesia has a collection of history on how to apply money as a means of payment, with the types of money used from the time of the kingdom to the present day.

The type of museum certainly affects how the collection is made. Museum curators have their own policies in how to create their collections.

2. Capture

Capturing the internal environment is done at the museum during a discussion held by the Ministry of Education and Culture with the theme "Designing Learning History In Museum." The discussion centered on the existence of the museum as a medium of learning history, and some activities were proposed to establish cooperation with the school so that the museum can become part of the students’ learning materials. It may be that this museum gives a history lesson, or provides a special space for teachers with learning materials.

This discussion is one part of the evidence showing how the museum cooperates with schools.
Generation or creation of knowledge is accomplished by designing the museum gallery according to the type of collection, like this transport museum did. One of the collections is an entire gangster town.

Figure 2. Gangster Town

Gangster Town or Gangster City is inhabited by a group of criminals, bandits, or gang members who have a penchant for fighting. Gangster Town is designed to reflect the true criminal life. In addition to the cars shown here, the atmosphere displays the conditions and locations nearby, like prisons, cafes, and statues of people who are sitting on the roadside smoking, and so forth.

Figure 3. Chinatown City Atmosphere

A similar thing presented by the transport museum is a corner of Chinatown, where the majority of the inhabitants are Chinese. This angle presents various forms of buildings and accessories such as street lamps that are similar to the actual conditions of Chinatown.

4. Processing and Transformation

Museums can use their internal environments to show information. For example, one collection in this museum provides information about the work of the blacksmith. The museum processes and transforms the information as written and with a replica in the hope that visitors learn more about the blacksmith’s work conditions.

Figure 4. Replica of the Blacksmith

5. Storage

The storage of museum collections is usually done in a special place that is adapted to environmental conditions to protect the collection. This can include special lighting, temperature, and air.

6. Search and Retrieval

Search and retrieval of museum knowledge can be done by creating a museum database that contains all the information contained in the museum’s collections. This allows researchers to find collections that are not currently being exhibited. Even if a collection is in storage space, it remains accessible through the database. This type of database is even better if it is accessible online, such as the one in Figure 5.

Figure 5. National Museum Online Collection

7. Representation

The museum can provide a digital representation in the internal environment to facilitate learning, such as in Purwakarta’s digital museum.
At the Bale Panyawangan museum, there is a collection of on-screen three-dimensional video showing the formation of Planet Earth. Visitors can also access the collection through digital tools that provide information about custom homes and typical foods of the archipelago. This type of presentation is expected to help visitors obtain information more easily.

8. Transfer and exchange

Transfer of knowledge can be done by conducting discussions among fellow museum members. In this activity a lot of tacit knowledge is shared. In its application, this can be done at the museum during a time of educational guidance. Educational experience differs among visitors, and this difference can then be shared with fellow museum members.

The knowledge sharing process can also be done by creating a museum on a website or social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and so on) that contains information about museum collections or activities. The museum can spread its knowledge to the wider community more easily using social media.

9. Maintenance and renewal

The museum must maintain the authenticity of its collections, whether internal or external.

As seen in Figure 7, several “museum doctors” are maintaining miniatures of the Dayak house collection. This fragile and very dry collection must be cleansed of dust with a brush and then wiped down with a white cloth. Given museum collections are of historical value, they must be carefully maintained.

5. Conclusions

Based on the results of the research we can conclude that knowledge preservation by a museum can cultivate the cultural literacy of the community. Knowledge preservation prerequisites can be carried out using the IAEA stages of identification, capture, generation or creation, processing and transformation, storage, search and retrieval, representation, transfer and exchange, and maintenance and renewal.

The author analyzed the internal environment of the museum and how the museum preserves its knowledge to be presented to the public. The results obtained are as follows:

a. Identification is done by the museum curator based on the museum type: general for general collections and special for special collections.

b. Capture is done by the museum actively through various discussions held by the Ministry of Education and Culture, because from here information about the policy changes will be obtained. The information obtained then becomes a provision for the museum to determine its organizational policies.

c. Generation or creation is done by combining collection and policy information as determined by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The museum can determine how the collection or design of museum galleries will be realized.

d. Processing and transformation is done by the museum in providing various facilities of information with the purpose of providing information that can be easily understood by visitors.

e. Storage is done by the museum by keeping the collection in accordance with the environment and the durability of the collection.

f. Search and retrieval is done by the museum creating a collection database to facilitate the public’s access to a collection even if it is in storage.

g. Representation is done by providing many ways to access the collection, such as digital.
h. Transfers and exchanges are done by museums having websites or social media-specific information about the collections.

i. Maintenance and renewal is done by the museum to conserve and keep its collection in good condition and updated.

The museum’s knowledge preservation activities will surely add more visitor insight into cultural literacy. Visitors can understand what historical collections exist in the museum, what the collections mean, and what information is contained in the collection. The cultural literature that the community possesses has already responded to UNESCO and the Sustainable Development Goals challenges launched by the United Nations. In addition, the community will also be continuously encouraged to preserve the culture of Indonesia.

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