Partnership of University Museums and Academic Libraries for Improvement of Islamic Studies Access Quality

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ABSTRACT

In almost all world-class reputable universities even in Indonesia not only libraries but also university museums play significant role in forming academic culture both for teaching and learning and research activities. Unfortunately only one state Islamic university is equipped with a university museum while the others do not have a museum. However, some lecturers, such as in some departments of Islamic history and civilization, utilize collections of museum objects as sources of information to support their teaching and research activities. For such reason as mentioned before in the background then this study was aimed to find out academicians perspective of state Islamic university based on their experiences about the importance of university museum and partnership between library and university museum for meeting information access purposes in teaching and learning and research particularly pertaining to Islamic studies. This study was conducted at four state Islamic universities. The study used qualitative method with phenomenon approach. The findings of the study revealed there are several lecturers particularly at the Islamic History and Civilization Departments of state Islamic universities utilize museum objects for their learning and research activities although their universities are not provided with museum. The partnership between academic library and university museum is believed by informants will make many opportunities for both lecturers and students to find more information access to meet their academic needs. This study is expected to open the horizons of the policy makers of Islamic universities in the importance of the university museum as a library partner.

Keywords: State Islamic Universities; Library; University Museum; Partnership.

INTRODUCTION

University museums in almost all reputable universities such as Harvard University and Oxford University and the others are important units besides libraries. Harvard University for example has 14 university museums that can be used for educational and research purposes. The 14 university museums at Harvard University are divided into two categories, namely the category of museums that are related to cultural issues, which consist of 5 museums and the other category is related to the discipline of sciences developed the university, they are 9 museums (Harvard University 2018).

University of Oxford has an impressive university museum which is well known as Oxford University Museum of Natural History. This university was founded in 1860, such university museum offer various lively programs of research, teaching and even public events. The museum holds an internationally-significant collection of natural history specimens and archives (Oxford University 2018).

In several Asia universities there are many university museums such as Malaya University Museum of Asia Art, University museum of National University Singapore and Istanbul University Museum and many others.

The reputable Malaya University there is a museum which is so called as Museum of Asian Art Malaya University. In the beginning the university library was used to display the artifacts. Then to anticipate the increasing acquisition in June 1980 the new building was built in between the Faculty of Economic and the Law Faculty (currently occupied by the Business and accounting Faculty). Through this university museum people could be facilitated to study three representative civilizations namely the Indian, the Chinese and the Islamic (Malay culture) (Malaya University 2017).

The other regional Southeast Asia reputable National University Singapore has university museum. The National University museum of Singapore holds around 8000 artifacts. All museum collections currently are online, open-access database and comprehensive. The museum collection consist of South and Southeast Asia collections represent civilizations such as India, China and Malay (National University Museum 2018).

University of Istanbul has Medical History Museum that founded by Prof Nil Sari in 1986. The objectives of this university museum are to prevent and save old historical materials from being lost and preserve them for facilitating the generation to meet their education and research needs (Sari 2018).

The existence of university museums are not only in other reputable universities abroad but also in almost Indonesia leading universities such as Universitas Gajah Mada (UGM), Universitas Indonesia (UI), Universitas Airlangga (Unair). The existence of university museums in all world-class universities indicate the university museums have significant contribution for facilitating academics to meet educational and research purposes.

In Indonesia there are two ministries that responsible in administrating educational system. They are the ministry of research, technology and higher education and the ministry of religion affairs. Several universities such as Universitas Indonesia, Universitas Gajah Mada, Universitas Airlangga and others are under the administration of the ministry of research, technology and higher education. Meanwhile universities that affiliated to religion education they are under the ministry of religion affairs such as state Islamic universities and state Islamic institutes and the others.

Pertaining to university museum, there are gaps between the universities under the ministry of research, technology and higher education and the ministry of religion affairs. Under the administration of the ministry of research, technology and higher education almost all universities are equipped with university museums. Such university museums will provide added value and many opportunities for students and lecturers to

access not only information in the library, but also information contained in museum collection in the forms of manuscripts, inscriptions, objects, replicas and so on. But on the contrary most universities under the ministry of religion affairs cannot provide alternative information of museum collection because there is only one state Islamic university is equipped with university museum namely Ar-Raniry state Islamic university Banda Aceh. However, for the purposes of learning and research activities that lecturers and students use museum collections as their basic references.

Therefore based on such pervious explained background then author believed the issue of partnership university museum and library is very interesting to discuss for improving the quality access of Islamic study resources.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Museum as one of the centers of cultural information resources, in fact the existence of a university museum and also a library is very necessary for academicians (Bell 2003). Museums whose the potential to provide opportunities for the community to be able to learn about ourselves, the world around us and everything about our past have a very significant role in inspiring us to make the future better by helping us remember and understand the past (Dupont 2007). The existence of the museum is also a support and principle of lifelong learning for the community to form a society that is democratic, equitable, professional, openness, accountable and partnership (Pasco Hernando Community College 2002).

A university museum is a tremendous resource center for higher education institutions to optimize positive impacts of various teaching and research activities (Kelly, Melanie, Ed. 2001, 5). As a powerful resource center, university museum through its collection objects is unique in bridging its role to spread knowledge and understanding of science, and also as a guardian of the preservation of various values in the fields of science and knowledge. As a cultural institution and source of information, museums in educational institutions such as universities logically should have functions and roles that are similar and parallel to the functions and roles of libraries. At higher education that university museum is a unit or institution that supports the mission of the university concerned directly related to the problem of education, research and community service activities.

The presence of museums in educational institutions, especially in universities, implicitly according to Higgins (2011) like libraries and archive institutions, as a center of information resources that can increase joint activities of gaps in terms of providing resources and creating the latest information services for the existence of the academic community and to meet the needs of potential users whose main purpose is for education (teaching and learning) and their research.

Weidenhammer (2013) revealed that a collection of university museums can be likened to a currency that has prestige value, because through the object of the museum the interpretation can reveal something that indicates about natural products and as a work of human culture that shows wealth and commitment community towards their self-development.

The Islamic perspective in interpreting museum is an institution whose function for preservation of human cultural heritage to be used as a means of education and research. This has been empirically proven that Muslims in the history of its development from the very beginning were very tolerant of the cultural heritage of other nation or religions that existed before.

Muslims treat the cultural heritage of other national civilizations while respecting and nurturing the cultural heritage and works of art of previous civilizations. Beginning with the entry of Muslims for the first time to Egypt under the leadership of 'Amr Al'As (642 AD), at that time Muslims found many relatively large temples, towering statues, and a wealth of antiquities which referring to ancient Egyptian, Greek, and Christian civilizations. There is no one (among Muslims) who did the destruction of all the objects of the previous civilization of the nations (Al-Ansari 2001).

Muslim Arabs who previously had relatively no high and well-established academic culture and civilization, then after they decided to open up and interact with various inheritance civilizations of nations that had developed both in the East and in the West such as Greece, Rome, India China, Egypt and Persia, then they became a nation that even advanced and developed in developing science (Yahyaei and Fakhteh Mahini 2012).

Opportunity of Muslims to interact with various sources of scientific heritage and civilization of these nations is a gift of Allah SWT that benefits them. So that with perseverance in developing science, they (Muslims) have succeeded in gaining glory in terms of building science, culture and human civilization that is recognized throughout the ages (Tierra 2017).

The university museum can contribute to extraordinary lifelong learning not only for students but also for alumni, local residents of all ages. The University has continuously operated a museum for the benefit of its students in applying object-based learning styles. The diverse collection of university museums with various exhibitions offered can attract many visitors every year. Therefore many people consider the university museum as their 'museum'. The idea of contributing both to campus life and community is a necessity for most university museums, but many struggle with the audience's puzzles as they work to allocate funds and human resources appropriately for collections, exhibitions and programs.

The function of a university museum in a university is the same as the existence of a library function which is at least able to function to support university missions as mandated in the national education system, that universities have the obligation not only as a function of education but also to carry out their role as a function of research and community service (Indonesia 2003).

Some interesting museum objects containing Islamic studies usually are a replica of the tombstone of Muslim sultans, various works of ceramics, porcelain wares with Arabic inscription, textiles, manuscripts (Kamada n.d.), glass, metalwork, photographs and others (Museum of Islamic Art 2016). All the museum collections mentioned before can

facilitate people of different gender, age and educational backgrounds to carry out learning and research and recreation activities.

For example museum collections such as replicas in the form of tombstones of Muslim royal sultans that contain inscriptions of Quranic verses and names of the earliest sultans of the Muslim kingdom in the Indonesian archipelago as well as other museum collections can be meaningful sources as references to Islamic studies.

RESEARCH DESIGN

This research was conducted in four places, namely Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University (Jakarta), Sunan Ampel (Surabaya) State Islamic University, Maulana Malik Ibrahim (Malang) State Islamic University and Sunan Kali Jaga State Islamic University (Yogyakarta).

This research is using qualitative research methods with a phenomenological approach. The phenomenology approach is an approach that describes the general meaning of each informant about a particular concept or phenomenon according to their experience (Creswell, 2014, p. 105).

The rationale for selecting qualitative design with the phenomenology approach because the author want to emphasize the urgent to understand informants' experience in utilizing museum collection for their purposes of teaching and learning and research activities pertaining to Islamic studies particularly Islamic history and civilization in Indonesia context. Because of that the researcher will more be depend on narrative expressions from informants through depth-interview.

In term of informants for information data collection in this research then the author (s) used snowball sampling technique. The reason of this technique was used because the author (s) do not know the appropriate person to be interviewed therefore the author (s) consult each of head department of Islamic history and civilization at four different state Islamic universities. Then each head department of Islamic history and civilization recommended us some names of appropriate lecturers and are considered more understand than others in this topic. It is also possible the other informants recommend other appropriate persons as informants as well.

To obtain reliable information from the interview results in depth, the researcher really must ensure competency and authoritative or authority from the people who will be as informants. At least based on these two criteria, it can be ascertained that data collection through in-depth interviews can obtain reliable and accurate information.

There are three ways to get rid of personal influence in conducting this research using the phenomenology approach. First set aside personal bias to minimize the impact on the results of research. Second one is bracketing all information considered important for the analysis. Then regard all information in the same or equal position to be evaluated further, after that makes delimitations in order to find out themes or groups of topics. Then the researchers express the findings descriptively. The third one the

researchers make critical reflection and judgment on the description of the previous findings (Pendit 2003, 291)

RESULTS

There are two meaning of university museums. The first one is that the meaning of university museum is museum reflects everything about the university or about historical development of the university. The other ones is museum about sciences and technology that developed by the faculties or study programs for support educational and research activities of academics.

In Indonesia universities both types of university museum are available. Although only one state Islamic university is equipped with university museum. However, this does not mean there is no effort to implement object-based learning models. The object-based learning model that is usually done in museums is also done using laboratories by many study programs in several faculties.

In this section the discussion of the findings of this study consists of two outlines, the first being a discussion of the meaning of the university museum and the second about the importance of partnerships between libraries and university museums.

The meaning of university museum from academics perspective

In state Islamic universities there are some study programs such as the department of Islamic history and civilization, the departments of medicine, the department of biology really need laboratories. The role of laboratories which is similar to museums can support the argument that the museum is needed for learning and research activities for academics. AH (informant) shows several benefits of museum in state Islamic university of Ar-raniry that well known "Museum and Center for Area Studies". Such Museum and Center for Area Studies has been able to stimulate the growth of scholarly studies of Islam and civilization especially in the surrounding Southeast Asia.

BS (informant) argues about the importance of museums for academics because there are many object that contain Islamic values. They can be studied to support their educational and research activities. Objects containing Islamic values can consist of various artifacts and replicas. Some objects that can be considered into museum or laboratory collections are artifacts, replicas, and porcelain items with Arabic inscriptions as well as many more in the form of ceramics, inscriptions and manuscripts.

Partnership of museum and library

On the basis of the informants opinion (lecturers and librarians) this study revealed that the existence of the museum would not be an overlapping function with the library. On the contrary it would be reinforcement in supporting education, teaching and also research. Therefore there must be conducive efforts to which would later be able to work together as partnership between academic library and university museum.

The informants have similar opinions with one another that the university museum has a very important role and function for academics especially at Islamic State Universities. With the existence of a university museum, it will add to the wealth of sources for research and teaching, the library in this case as a provider of information resources within the university.

The informants expressed that the university museum is necessary and must be the priority to realize but university museum of the state Islamic universities must be related to the theme in the field of Islamic values as distinction to other non-Islamic universities at education institutions under the Ministry of Religion specifically Islam. The efforts to develop university will be able to provide variety collections for both lecturers and student access to meet their academic needs in reaching the state Islamic university mission of Islamic knowledge integration.

In addition, the informants also emphasize that the most important factor for building university museum and its collections is there must be a good will among university support units.

Therefore informants also believe that the society has strong trust of state Islamic universities then all local government, individuals or donators, funding institutions, museum association and so on will support for the objectives of such building university museums.

CONCLUSION

The presence of university museum should not be considered a waste but it should be an important requirement that must be met by educational institutions like a university. The urgency of the university museum as a center of information resource must be positioned as a partner for the library. The existence of a university museum will add to the wealth of sources of research and teaching. The libraries in this case as a provider of information resources within the university will be equipped with a university

The existence of the museum would not be overlapping function with the library, on the contrary it would be an important factor in supporting education, teaching and research within the state Islamic universities scope which would later be able to work together one another.

The university museums at the state Islamic universities must be partner of academic libraries to provide information access quality for university community. Therefore this research is expected to be able to raise awareness of decision makers and others also at the university so that they provide real support for the establishment of museums at each university.

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