

DEGREE OF PUBLICNESS AS ACCESSIBILITY IN INDEPENDENT LIBRARY (CASE STUDY: FOREWORD LIBRARY, SOUTH JAKARTA)

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Abstract

Independent libraries have increasingly evolved into third places that accommodate literacy, social interaction, and community activities. This transformation raises questions regarding how public accessibility is maintained within privately managed library spaces. This study aims to examine the accessibility level of Foreword Library, South Jakarta, through an evaluation of its degree of publicness. A mixed-method case study approach was employed by combining field observations during normal operational conditions and semi-structured interviews with library users and management. The collected data were assessed using an integrated publicness evaluation framework consisting of the Publicness Evaluation Model for Libraries (PEML), the Star Model of Publicness, and the Six-Axial Model. The evaluation focused on three dimensions, namely design, management, and use, represented through indicators related to accessibility, physical configuration, management practices, user diversity, and activity patterns. The findings demonstrate that the degree of publicness provides a measurable representation of library accessibility. Foreword Library exhibits a relatively high level of accessibility during normal operations, although several indicators, particularly those associated with physical access and management, remain influenced by its status as an independently managed private library. These results indicate that evaluating the degree of publicness offers an effective framework for understanding accessibility in independent libraries functioning as contemporary third places.

Keywords: accessibility; degree of publicness; independent library; third place.

INTRODUCTION

Libraries have transitioned from being information repositories to public spaces that facilitate social interaction and community building. Rather than being judged solely by their collections, modern libraries are now evaluated by their ability to offer inclusive and accessible environments for diverse groups (Fatmawati et al., 2018). This shift in the library's function aligns with the evolving concept of the "third place" introduced by Oldenburg (1999). This concept explains that, in addition to home (first place) and the workplace (second place), people need a neutral space that allows them to build social relationships, interact informally, and achieve balance in their daily lives. The existence of a "third place" contributes to an improved quality of life by providing a space that supports the formation of social networks and a sense of belonging to a