

Archiving the Past, Citing the Future: From Old-Fashioned Book Stackers to Modern-Day Educational Storytellers

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Introduction

The Association of Professional School Librarians in Indonesia (APISI) is a self-funded private organization established in 2006. Starting with a small group of enthusiastic school librarians, APISI now maintains hundreds of members nationwide and actively seeks opportunities to collaborate and partner with schools, businesses, government, not-for-profit organizations, etc. However, after seventeen years of serving school librarians in Indonesia, the APISI leader decided it was time for a change.

This article aims to help leadership teams in similar associations conduct change in their organization, especially those dealing with library and librarianship, including the preparation for change and the steps to be taken.

Organizational Change in APISI

The Preparation

Let us start with the vision, mission, strategy, and programs of APISI. With a vision to “demonstrate the professionalism of school librarians through a continuous self-development and to create a better sphere for school libraries,” APISI (n.d.) declared a mission to develop a place and to provide support for the competency development of school librarians in Indonesia. Aiming to create and increase the knowledge interaction between school librarians to encourage research in school librarianship, APISI is showing its commitment by conducting various development programs, such as KubikLive, ABCLive, Scholar Life, and Short Courses. Nevertheless, after seventeen years of its establishment, APISI lacks a strategy statement.

What is strategy? Whittington et al. (2020) state that a strategy deals with an organization’s long-term direction, typically measured over years. Based on recent discussions with APISI’s leader, the organization’s strategy statement is: (a) To be the leading voice for educational

storytelling and digital literacy in Indonesia by 2025, and (b) to be the knowledge hub of school librarianship in Indonesia by 2025. Why does APISI need to change? There are three main reasons for this: (1) The current president of APISI, who has led the organization for almost two decades, desires to step down; (2) Millennials and Gen Z librarians are now joining the organization, and APISI is looking at a possible new leadership direction from these creative young minds to bring the organization to the next level, create better partnership opportunities, and provide a unique service to the community; and (3) combining point (1) and (2) together, the APISI leader wants to update its vision, mission, and programs to be in line with modern-day environment and generations. Based on those explanations and using Lewin's theory of force field analysis, the current leadership team of APISI has listed six forces that drive and six that restrain their change initiative

During the seventeen years of servicing Indonesian school librarians, APISI has experienced successes and failures. For example, the unwillingness of some potential successors to take over leadership positions and the financial struggle overshadowing the organization due to the inability of its leadership team to create new and creative programs that are different from what other associations offer or appeal to younger-generation librarians, and the fact that its baby boomer and Gen X members are reluctant to accept the idea of APISI being modernized. On the other hand, APISI needs to increase competitiveness by focusing on its core competencies, e.g., storytelling and digital literacy, and attracting Millennials and Gen Z librarians to join the association. Based on this analysis, the APISI leaders believe that to excel in their transformation efforts, they need to do the following:

1. Focus on the driving forces and use them to reshape the organizational vision, mission, objectives, strategies, and programs.
2. Communicate the restraining forces and use them as objectives for individual and organizational development plans.

The Process

To achieve the desired change, the current leadership team of APISI decided to use Kotter's Eight Steps for Leading Change (Kotter 2020). To lead the change in APISI, a guiding coalition was formed under the name of Tim Formatur (Nominating Committee) in fall 2023. The committee of seven people committed to change represents the diversity of APISI in terms of function, level, gender, faith, and ideas. This committee is responsible for

1. reshaping APISI's vision, mission, objectives, and strategies;

2. refocusing APISI programs to its core competencies (e.g., storytelling and digital literacy);
and
3. planning, executing, and evaluating the selection and development of the new APISI leadership team, especially in leadership.

As leadership plays an essential role in leading an effective change, the APISI leaders agreed to apply a mixture of the four leadership styles that allow their judgment on their members' readiness and capability to change; however, the focus will be on balancing the transformational-transactional style of leadership. According to Whittington et al. (2020), transformational/charismatic leadership builds a vision, creates an organizational identity to support the vision, and energizes APISI's members to achieve it, while transactional leadership focuses on designing systems and controls and deals with changes in structure, setting targets to be completed, financial incentives, project management, and performance monitoring of the individual. Citing Avolio (2010), APISI leaders believe that the most influential leaders can balance transformational and transactional leadership across time, situations, and challenges. APISI is looking for this type of leader in its upcoming leadership team.

As a founder and current president of APISI, Ms. Latuputty-George is considered the right person to lead this transformation effort due to her clear vision of where APISI is going to be in the future, valid inputs of what APISI needs to do to get there, and strong knowledge and ability to bring APISI to that future. Ms. Latuputty-George's competency in school librarianship as a result of her education and years of experience working as a library manager, her capability to build a strong network with external organizations as well as government, and her passion for storytelling and literacy/digital literacy programs have brought APISI to its current position as a front-runner in school librarianship in the country. In addition, Ms. Latuputty-George has been acknowledged as one of the prominent school library experts in Indonesia. Nevertheless, the change effort can be challenging. Therefore, communication between APISI leaders and members needs to be maintained regularly with clarity about why APISI needs change and how the change will affect the organization and individual members.

Alongside the internal reorganization effort, the organizational growth strategy is another critical factor the Nominating Committee needed to oversee, as requested by the current APISI leadership team. What is a growth strategy? According to Thakor (2011), a growth strategy is identifying a key value driver linked to the organization's core competence so that the resources can be allocated to drive revenue and growth in all parts of the business (p. 42). In its current state, APISI leadership is focusing on the internal growth of its members and not the external

environment (e.g., competitors and community). With the continuing reorganization and the potentiality for Millennial and Gen Z leadership, the existing leadership has decided to redirect its focus from a “collaborate” (serving internal needs) to a “create” (create and innovate/serving the community’s needs) growth strategy.

This change is reflected in the association’s growth strategy from “to provide development programs for school librarians as required by the Indonesian Library Association to our internal members” to “pioneering the development of future-oriented storytelling and digital literacy-focused programs to our internal members and external community.” The organizational change is expected to be completed by summer 2024.

Conclusion

Change starts with a vision and will end with the fulfillment of that vision. In the case of APISI, the vision is to transform its members from old-fashioned librarians (book stackers, catalogers, etc.) to modern-day librarians (educational storytellers, digital literacy experts, etc.). To accomplish this vision, APISI needs a strong, skillful, and highly experienced leadership to lead and communicate the change process and progress, and to encourage and motivate its members to embrace the change and make it happen.

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