The Conventional Knowledge Management Method: Analysis from an Islamic Perspective

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Abstract. The contemporary conventional knowledge management method is expanding in line with other management methods adopted by any institution. This management method is used by 80% of institutions, including Islamic institutions. It is based on the conventional paradigm but it is still practiced by Islamic institutions. The objective of this method is more towards being solely profit oriented, while Islamic institutions have their own objectives in operating their institutions. Hence, what is the effect on the main objective of Islamic institutions if the conventional knowledge management method is used in the operation of Islamic institutions. Is this practice permitted in Islam? This working paper established three objectives that discuss, analyse and conclude on the conventional knowledge management method from an Islamic perspective. The objectives are to identify the aim of the conventional knowledge management method, analyse the conventional knowledge management method from an Islamic perspective and summarise the conventional knowledge management method from an Islamic perspective. This qualitative study used the document research method for collecting data, while the content analysis method was used to analyse the data. Findings indicate four main points that can be further described when discussing the conventional knowledge management method from an Islamic perspective. First, Islamic institutions should adopt a knowledge management method that is based on the philosophy and *tasawur* of Islamic knowledge. Second, the objective must be consistent with the blessings of Allah SWT. Third, adopt a more holistic and proper approach in all aspects, and fourth, the process used must not contradict the *Syariat* when all the three earlier points have been examined, amended, and scrutinised.

Keywords: Method · Management of Conventional Knowledge · Islamic Perspective

1 Introduction

Every institution must use some type of management method to support their institution's activities. Among the management methods that are widely used in institutions today is the traditional knowledge management method. Common knowledge management methods are a new field that is developing rapidly. Current knowledge management methods are used by 80% of the world's largest institutions, including Islamic-based institutions [1]. Furthermore, according to [2], common knowledge management methods are increasingly recognized in realizing the goals of an institution.

The question is, what is the goal of common knowledge management methods? Is this common knowledge management method suitable to be used as a management method in managing an Islamic-based institution? To answer this question, the discussion in this paper is divided into three parts. First, identify the goals of common knowledge management methods. Second, analyze common knowledge management methods from an Islamic perspective. The third is formulating a common knowledge management method from an Islamic perspective.

2 Common Knowledge Management Methods

Knowledge is one of the elements that play an important role in the development and formation of an institution's competitiveness [3]. [4] states that knowledge can create benefits for the economy, institutions and society. Knowledge includes intuition, rules and procedures [5] that lead to actions and decisions [6]. [7] classified knowledge into two types, namely tacit knowledge and written knowledge. Tacit knowledge is difficult to explain or convey in an easily understandable context. In other words, tacit knowledge is defined as knowledge that underlies expertise in shaping the intuition and ideas of institutional members. Written knowledge is defined as the components of knowledge that are easy to understand and explain and can be conveyed in the form of words or numbers. In other words, written knowledge is like confidential institutional documents.

The next discussion continued to the definition of knowledge management. Many definitions of knowledge management have been put forward by academic scientists. For example, knowledge management is defined as an organized and systematic activity of an institution to improve its capacity of an institution. Knowledge management is also defined as a way to manage activities in an institution. For example, the definition of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, (2002) emphasizes that knowledge management refers to all activities related to knowledge sharing within an institution.

Next is related to the definition of common knowledge management methods. Common knowledge management methods have been stated by several scholars including [8–10]. According to the common view, knowledge management methods are commonly seen as a process that acts as the basis of knowledge accumulation that leads to the initiation of innovation and productivity within the institution. In other words, common knowledge management methods in general are an effective learning process related to the exploration, exploitation and sharing of human knowledge explicitly and implicitly to achieve institutional goals. Furthermore, the common method of knowledge management is to create, maintain and use as much knowledge as possible in an institution [8]. In addition, according to [9], knowledge management methods are usually a process to manage, identify and share the knowledge assets stored in a person, including expertise and experience that is visible and hidden. [10] also defines common knowledge management methods as a systematic process to share and use knowledge to identify, manage and share all information assets in the institution. These assets include databases, policies and procedures, employee experience and expertise.

Accordingly, to enable institutions to continue to compete, each institution needs to collect, use and store the knowledge efficiently. This is supported by [9] by saying,

through common knowledge management methods, all knowledge can be extracted, organized and reused by the institution as input for other members of the institution. This is because, every member of the institution has knowledge, experience and skills stored in themselves which is said to be tacit.

Accordingly, it can be understood that knowledge management methods are commonly considered an important concept and instrument to realize the goals of an institution. In other words, knowledge management methods are commonly seen as the main strategy in implementing the management of an institution to achieve profit. For example, according to [11], the Public Service Sector in Malaysia has used practical knowledge management methods as the main strategy in managing their institutions. Furthermore, in the Malaysian context, it can be seen that since the 1990s, many institutions have begun to take steps to implement common knowledge management methods as a strategy to achieve high productivity. It starts from the positive influence brought by multinational institutions such as Microsoft and Hewlett Packard (HP) which has led to the practice, process and application of common knowledge management methods in this country [12].

A good common knowledge management method will help the institution to continue to learn new knowledge so that it can be put into practice and can be used whenever it is needed [13]. The usual knowledge management method needs to go through certain processes to make it a complete knowledge management method. These processes are discussed by several writers such as [14–16].

[14] state that knowledge management methods are commonly divided into four processes, namely knowledge creation, knowledge preservation, knowledge dissemination, and knowledge acceptance. In addition, [15] lists four processes that need to go through for knowledge management methods, namely knowledge acquisition, knowledge creation, knowledge transfer or use, and knowledge storage. [16] also highlights the knowledge management process in depth which consists of five processes namely knowledge acquisition, knowledge creation, knowledge storage, knowledge transfer and knowledge application. Sajjad M Nasimuddin (2012) [16] argued by taking the views of several academics such as [3] who also put knowledge acquisition as the first step in the knowledge management process. With this, he believes that knowledge acquisition is seen as the most important process in the knowledge management process.

In other words, he thinks the acquisition of knowledge is the first step to achieving the goal of knowledge management. He strengthened the argument by saying that knowledge must be acquired before it can be created and disseminated because the nature of knowledge must be sought. He argued that knowledge needs to be acquired through tacit and written knowledge, that is, through the ideas of institutional members and institutional written documents. [15] also puts knowledge storage as the last step in the knowledge management process to ensure that the knowledge is safe for reuse.

Therefore, it can be seen how important the process is in the construction of common knowledge management methods to achieve the institution's goals. This is seen to be in line with the views of [17] who say that the process of knowledge management methods is generally considered important as a strategy to use expertise to create strong competitiveness in today's business situation. [18] also asserted that the success of an institution depends on the process of knowledge management methods used. Those

processes are implemented to achieve the goal of conventional knowledge management methods, which is to gain profit. This is supported by [19] by stating that the goal of the common knowledge management method is specifically to discuss the profit of the institution as the main goal of the institution.

This profit goal will be achieved by improving the performance of the institution and thereby maximizing the productivity results through the mentioned processes. This is supported by [20], saying that common knowledge management methods will use appropriate technology to increase the thinking and intellect of institutional members to improve the institution's performance and productivity. [21] is of the view that the goal of common knowledge management methods, which is to achieve profit, can be achieved by further improving the performance and capabilities of the institution through the process of finding, sharing and creating knowledge in an institution.

In other words, when performance and productivity are increased to the maximum, then the main goal of conventional institutional knowledge management methods will be automatically achieved, which is to maximize income and profit in the world alone [22]. Furthermore, according to [22], the maximization of income and profit in the world alone is placed as the main goal of traditional institutional management because it is said that it will contribute to the well-being of life. In addition, an indication of the failure or success of an institution is also referred to as the production and profit results of an institution. For example, in the Arab world, this is emphasized in the Human Development Report in Saudi Arabia (2003) entitled "Towards a Knowledge Economy," which describes the goal of production and productivity based on knowledge (United Nations Development Program, 2003).

Accordingly, it can be concluded that the main goal of traditional knowledge management methods is to ensure that the institution maximizes productivity and expands the market as much as possible. In other words, it only emphasizes the point of view of worldly profit. This is seen as contradicting the goal of Islamic institutions which is to achieve the pleasure of Allah SWT in addition to achieving other material goals such as profit and production results (Fig. 1).

3 Knowledge Management Methods from Islamic Perspective

Islam is a religion that does not only measure material aspects but more than that, which measures success according to spiritual measurements [22]. This is because the spiritual element is from the religious dimension. Furthermore, from the point of view of Islamic scholars, humans are created to have two aspects that need each other, namely the spiritual and physical aspects [23]. Therefore, it can be understood that a prosperous individual is an individual who has a balance between spiritual and material aspects. This is in line with the goal of Islamic institutions, which is to put the pleasure of Allah SWT as the main goal in addition to achieving otherworldly goals.

However, this is seen as contradicting the traditional knowledge management method when it is customary to only focus on the goals of an institution only to collect worldly profits. Such a goal will only give the impression that conventional knowledge management methods have the same philosophy as a conventional management philosophy. The common management philosophy is born from western thinking that does not make
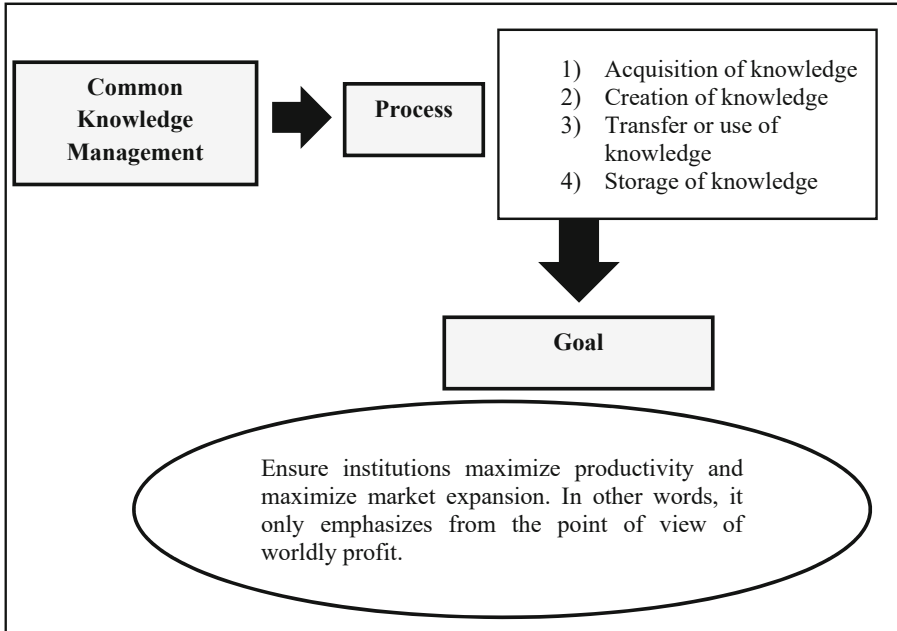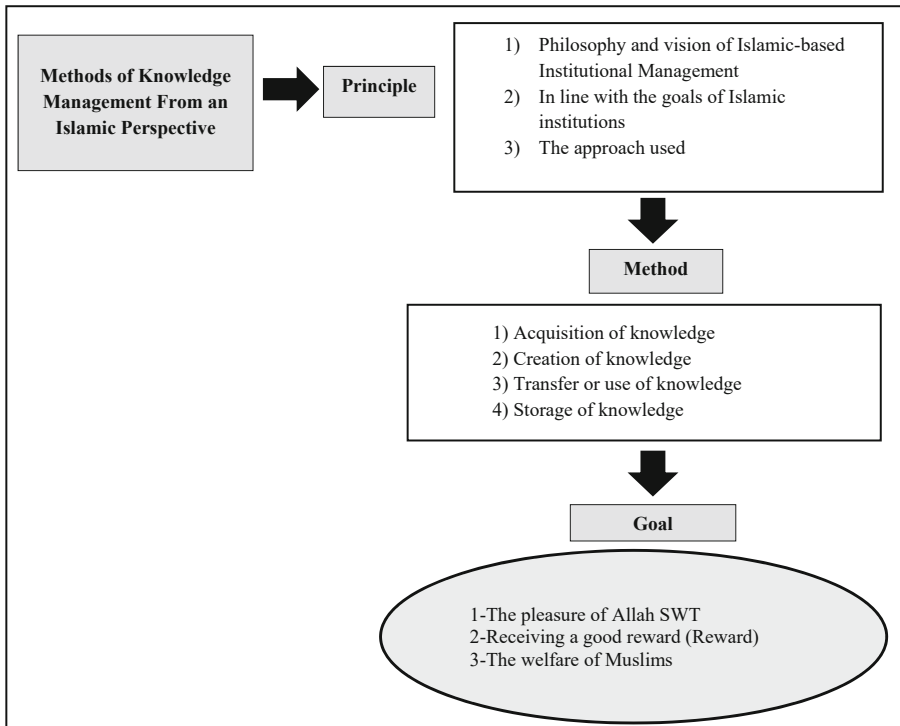
Fig. 1. Common Knowledge Management Methodology Framework

religious aspects the basis of life activities including management activities [24]. In other words, according to [25], management philosophy usually makes consumerism and profit maximization the main goal in measuring the success of an institution. Therefore, when human life is dominated by the nature of seeking worldliness alone, then the time scale of development will only be limited to worldly life alone. This contradicts the principles of Islamic management which take into account the eternal afterlife and put the pleasure of Allah SWT as the ultimate goal of life.

In addition, the goal of conventional knowledge management methods is actually seen as contradicting the two main principles of Islamic institutional management, namely Allah SWT as the creator and man as a creature [25]. Based on the first and second principles, which is the relationship between Allah SWT as the creator and man as his creation, an institution should not make profit maximization the main goal of the institution. This is because the goal contradicts the principle of monotheism in Islam where every Muslim entrusts his life to Allah SWT.

In other words, Islam emphasizes that every Muslim's behavior, especially in the context of institutional management, must be based on God, which is Allah SWT who is based on the Islamic faith. In other words, according to [26], there is a close relationship between spirituality and religion in every human behavior. An individual is actually able to meet the balance between spiritual and material needs, if he includes spiritual elements based on divinity in himself [27]. This is seen to be in line with the main goal that must be achieved by Islamic institutions, which is to gain the pleasure of Allah SWT as the creator of all creatures in the world [25]. Problems occur when the conventional knowledge management method only emphasizes the aspect of worldly profit without

Fig. 2. Common Knowledge Management Methods from an Islamic Perspective

taking into account spiritual matters that will lead to the main goal of Islamic institutions, which is to achieve the pleasure of Allah SWT. This is different from Islam which also emphasizes material things after taking spiritual things into account. This is mentioned by [22], saying that in Islam the activities of managing an institution well from the point of view of productivity and material production are also demanded in Islam (Fig. 2).

He brought the word of Allah SWT in the Qur'an which requires Muslims to earn profit through work. The word of Allah SWT in Surah al-Baqarah which means, "There is no sin for you to seek bounty (prosperity from business results) from your Lord" (Surah al-Baqarah 2:198). However, this is not meant to require Muslims to only seek profit from business alone, but the profit and income should be used in the way of goodness for the general good such as charity, helping the poor, paying zakat and so on. With this kind of thing, a horizontal relationship that is a relationship between people and people will be built. In other words, it will be a tool to gain the pleasure of Allah SWT which is the main goal of Islamic institutions.

This is seen as important because only by attaining the pleasure of Allah SWT will humans be blessed with al-falah, which is happiness and well-being in this world and the hereafter [28]. Therefore, in Islam, an Islamic institution in particular cannot feel that it has succeeded when it can maximize profits only if it does not succeed in achieving the more important goal which is the pleasure of Allah SWT. In other words, the true meaning of the success of an Islamic institution is when the members of the institution

are rewarded for their good deeds in the afterlife, that is by gaining the pleasure of Allah SWT. This is what needs to be firmly held by Muslims today, especially in the context of members of an Islamic institution.

4   Analysis of Knowledge Management Methods from Islamic Perspective

Based on the discussion above, clearly shows four significant differences between the conventional knowledge management method and the Islamic perspective. The first difference refers to the basis used in building knowledge management methods. The approach that is used as a basis by the general view is not emphasized but rather only leads to the process that formulates knowledge management methods. Whereas in Islam, certain aspects are emphasized such as the careful selection of authentic sources before devising a method. The precision that is meant starts with the philosophical aspect and understanding of the field of knowledge itself so that the knowledge is managed and delivered through certain methods and conditions.

Both aspects of the parallelism of the goals are taken into account. The goal of an Islamic institution plays an important role in the direction of building a framework for managing anything in the institution including knowledge management methods. Therefore, it can be seen that the knowledge management method and the goals of Islamic institutions need to be standardized according to the needs of the institution to strengthen the main goal of building the knowledge management method. As has been discussed, the goal of profit is the most dominant goal of institutions that implement common knowledge management methods. In the context of Islam, there is a need where the goal of knowledge management also needs to be re-evaluated if the Islamic institution operates with a profit-oriented approach such as Islamic Banks and the like. The issue of profit as a goal needs to be aligned to contribute to the well-being of Muslim life and especially for the Islamic religion. Not just to make a profit for the institution itself but bring benefits for all. Islam explains that the activities of managing an institution well from the point of view of productivity and material production are also demanded in Islam. So profit is allowed in Islam as long as it does not lead to disbelief.

Third, Islam sees the approach of conventional knowledge management methods implemented in Islamic institutions as needing to use a more holistic and perfect approach in all aspects. The approach here involves individuals involved in the process of managing knowledge in Islamic institutions. The approach emphasizes two aspects which are behaviour and spirituality based on the divinity within. These two aspects play an important role in the impact of knowledge management methods in Islamic institutions. The behaviour of Islamic individuals will reflect their way of managing knowledge in the institution. The manners, attitudes and principles of Muslim individuals symbolize the way they interact in managing and achieving the goals of knowledge management. Muslim individuals should always ensure that their spiritual and physical bodies are in a balanced state because if these two elements are not balanced, it will lead to the individual's tendency to achieve the same goals as in conventional institutions. Therefore, this behaviour and spirituality should be taken into account as the basis of knowledge management methods.

The fourth is related to the process of designing knowledge management methods. Common knowledge management methods, namely knowledge acquisition, knowledge creation, knowledge transfer or use and knowledge storage are seen to have no problem being used if the three differences above can be improved in Islamic institutions. Islam does not reject good things, however, the basis of common knowledge management according to Islam needs to be researched and refined by the rules of Islam itself to be used. Al-Quran and As-Sunnah itself is the most complete source of Islam. However, in dealing with new matters related to benefits, deeper attention needs to be given because the image of Islam is always viewed by the world community. Muslim individuals cannot compromise with any matter that is beyond the limits of Sharia even though worldly rewards such as wealth and profit are always shown in front of the eyes. The pleasure of Allah SWT is the main and essential happiness and well-being that every Muslim needs to achieve in this world and the hereafter.

5   Conclusion

Common knowledge management methods are increasingly recognized as a critical approach that can be used to achieve a competitive position and a superior level of achievement [29]. However, this common knowledge management method has a common philosophy that aims at a worldly profit only. Therefore, knowledge management methods need to be overhauled from the grassroots and rebuild a knowledge management method based on Islam. This is reasonable because an Islamic institution must use management born from the mould of Islamic tasawur to achieve the goal of the Islamic institution itself, which is to achieve the pleasure of Allah SWT. In a summary, this paper suggests that every institution uses knowledge management methods that are based on Islam, which refers to Islamic epistemology and tasawur as a guide that will give birth to the main goal of pleasing Allah SWT.

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