

Knowledge Sharing as a Model in Building Sustainable Learning Organization

Muhardi Muhardi, Nurdin Nurdin, Aminuddin Irfani

Economy and Business Faculty

Universitas Islam Bandung

Bandung, Indonesia

muhardi@unisba.ac.id, nurdin@unisba.ac.id, aminuddin@unisba.ac.id

Abstract—This research aims to discover the efforts made by pesantren (Islamic boarding school) to be a sustainable learning organization that continuously adapts and innovates in an ever-changing environment. This research took two pesantrens in Sukabumi and Garut, Indonesia, as sample units. The research data was collected by in-depth discussion through Focus Group Discussion approach. The result showed that pesantren leaders played a great role in the formation of pesantren as learning organizations, through knowledge sharing as an enrichment model of science by utilizing internal knowledge of pesantren. Regular Al-Quran recitation, training activities, study visit, social media, formal study, events, provision of reference books, and conference activities are some of the media for knowledge sharing. To build learning organization, the empowerment of santri (students of pesantren) is carried out through field practice and the creation of various creative products. Knowledge sharing initiated by pesantren leaders has transformed into an organizational culture in building pesantren into a sustainable learning organization.

Keywords—*knowledge sharing; learning organization*

I. INTRODUCTION

Science is a very important subject, not only for individuals, but also for organizations. Science also plays an important role in the process of forming competitive advantages and distinctive characteristics of the organization in an effort to face various challenges and opportunities ahead. Pesantren as one of the organizations engaged in education experienced the same situation. Science as an important aspect of educational organizations has crucial power to provide quality services and building organizational capacity.

Pesantren is one of the educational institutions which receive major attention from Indonesian government [1]. As an effort to deal with the dynamics of education in Indonesia, pesantren continues to expand its scientific resources and variations. To optimize the absorption of science, pesantren generally equips the students with specific knowledge which is tailored to their abilities, interests, and talents.

Islamic education is the main focus of learning in pesantrens, but some of them such as pesantren of Ath-Thaariq and Dzikir Al-Fath in Garut and Sukabumi teach other sciences

of agriculture and trade. One of the media used by pesantren is *knowledge sharing* model.

Pesantrens use various efforts in learning science both internally and externally to measure the potential of their students (santri), which then improve them in accordance with their specifications and expertise. The researchers are interested in further examination of whether knowledge sharing is a model which used in building Ath-Thaariq pesantren in Garut and Dzikir Al-Fath in Sukabumi to become sustainable learning organizations.

II. RESEARCH METHOD

The method used in this study is qualitative descriptive method limited to sample unit. This method is chosen since it can help the researchers to explain in depth various problems identified in this research and collect various potential problems arise. Samples of this research are pesantren of Ath-Thaariq in Garut and Dzikir Al-Fath in Sukabumi, Indonesia.

This research requires two types of data, namely primary and secondary data. Primary data is collected through Focus Group Discussion (FGD) which involves relevant stakeholders, while secondary data was collected by studying administrative data sources and relevant literature.

III. KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND LEARNING ORGANIZATION

To be creative and innovative, an organization should establish a continuous learning culture [2]. The learning process and expansion of science for an organization can be improved by involving its members in various scientific discussion activities [3]. The learning process is very important for educational institutions as organizations that continue to face various challenges both internally and externally. This is what drives educational organizations to innovate and never stop learning.

One of the ways to create learning culture in an organization is by providing great learning opportunities for every individual in the organization [4]. Learning organization, as defined by Limwichtir et al. is an organization where all members are encouraged to learn continuously as an effort to increase their capacity to adapt to external environment [5]. According to Tabatabai and Ghorbi, learning organizations are

organizations that consistently develop their capacity to create the future by empowering the whole aspects [6]. Based on above definitions, it can be understood that learning organizations are organizations that continue to develop and innovate to increase the capacity of their members and strengthen the organizational capabilities toward the environment. Organizations must also ensure that the knowledge they have can provide benefits to the success of the organization.

Organizations can also enrich their knowledge through a communication process by providing opportunities for each individual involved to convey their ideas. Meanwhile, related to knowledge sharing activities, Swift et al. state that when individuals and/or an organization is involved in the communication process directly or indirectly to obtain knowledge, they have been engaged in knowledge sharing activities [7].

Knowledge sharing activity is the spread or absorption of knowledge in the scope of individuals or groups [8]. Similar to the statement, Jiacheng et al. say that knowledge sharing activities are proactive actions carried out by one individual or more, either in their function as part of the organization or not, to disseminate and exchange knowledge in any form [9]. Wang and Noe, state that knowledge sharing leads to the fulfillment of information to help and collaborate with other people in the process of problem solving, developing new ideas, or implementing various policies and procedures [10]. Based on that, it can be interpreted that knowledge sharing is a process of developing, enriching, absorbing, disseminating, and exchanging knowledge among individuals in an organization as an effort to increase the capacity and sustainability of the organization.

There are two types of knowledge in knowledge sharing process which are very important for the success of knowledge sharing itself, namely *tacit* and *explicit* knowledge [11]. Explicit knowledge is a science that can be codified and expressed in the form of formal manual [12], while tacit knowledge is more intuitive and difficult to express verbally and in writing [13]. Tacit knowledge is generally obtained through experience and observation activities [14, 15]. Both of these sciences are important for every organization. Explicit knowledge can be used as organizational direction because it is easy to codify, but this science also requires the existence of tacit knowledge as part of the experience and performance of individuals in an organization as a whole. By managing these two sciences, organizations can create a strong culture of knowledge sharing and increase their capacity as a sustainable learning organization

IV. KNOWLEDGE SHARING IN PESANTREN

The results of research conducted at Ath-Thaariq pesantren in Garut and Dzikir Al-Fath in Sukabumi, Indonesia, showed that the knowledge sharing practice has become a learning model that can be used by people in pesantren. Hence, the accumulation of learning becomes a reflection of pesantren as a sustainable learning organization.

Knowledge sharing in both pesantren is initiated and practiced directly by the Kyai (an Indonesian call in term of

religion for someone with knowledge and wisdom), the leader of pesantren. This means that the leadership of Kyai has a strategic role in building pesantren as a sustainable learning organization. The practice of knowledge sharing in pesantren is not only done through formal science learning, but also in informal ones. In terms of time, the practice can be carried out on a daily basis, weekly, annually, or even adjusted with the time when the event is held.

The presence of Kyai (the leader), Ustadz (the teachers), and santri (the students) in the process of knowledge sharing in pesantren is a form of synergy which shows that learning is not only for santri, but for all people to get the same knowledge and process of learning. In order to become agents of knowledge sharing in pesantren (among fellow santri), or in external parties (to the communities around them), students build their characters and study knowledge.

To understand the scope of knowledge sharing as a model to build learning organizations, pesantren utilizes various of commonly used media. This is done as an enrichment of knowledge for pesantren communities, which beneficial to the sustainability of the organization for now and in the future.

Knowledge forums (majlis) which are a real effort established in pesantren function as media for knowledge sharing. By holding the main focus on Islamic education, majlis forums discuss various sciences and wisdom such as social science, the values of life, and others. One example of the activities is a regular forum at dawn conducted by the Kyai to teach Islamic education to his students. There are also daily or weekly Al-Quran recitations and discussion about Islamic knowledge which is very important for human life.

Training activities are one of the media for knowledge sharing; and pesantren of Ath-Thaariq in Garut organizes such activity in form of teaching agricultural and environmental science to the students. The training activity carried out at pesantren of Dzikir Al-Fath in Sukabumi is entrepreneurship skills and knowledge needed to build the economic independence in pesantren community. Knowledge sharing is not only done in the internal scope of pesantren, but also involves the surrounding community in an activity of routine weekly recitation program intended to share knowledge and a form of concern for the surrounding community.

Other form of knowledge sharing media in Dzikir Al-Fath pesantren is a study visit to several trading companies, such as Dua Kelinci company, Mayora, and other companies as an effort to improve students' learning about labor market and real learning about entrepreneurship. The follow-up of this study visit is the collaborative program where santri can work in the companies using outsourcing systems, that is they are working while studying, which form a spirit of independence and building entrepreneurship for the santri.

Study visit to pesantren as the object of this research is also done by academics from various fields of science. It opens the possibility for pesantrens to identify their various weaknesses and strengths internally, as well as various threats and opportunities faced externally. This identification process arises from a discussion forum of focus group discussion between pesantren and visitors for the enrichment of science.

Besides being frequently visited by academics and practitioners, the leaders of the two pesantren studied were also often invited to be the speakers at various official forums to share knowledge. In addition, pesantrens also carry out knowledge sharing activities with news media of printed and electronic through visits.

The practice of knowledge sharing which makes these two pesantrens learning organizations is not only carried out in the internal and around pesantren, but also through a broader media, including visits from foreign parties, social media, seminars, events, and formal studies. The pesantren studied often get visits from foreign parties, either individually or from certain organizations. For example, the success of Ath-Thaariq pesantren in cultivating herbs that created food independence for santri, has gotten the attention of a scientist and environmental activist from India. The activist then gave scholarships to pesantren leaders as an encouragement for them to learn more about the cultivation of organic agriculture-based crops. Through this learning opportunity, the skill of pesantren in the field of organic agriculture is getting improved. With the leaders who have specific and deep expertise, pesantrens have become more knowledgeable in their fields. In addition to Islamic education as their focus of learning, there is also organic-based agricultural knowledge which is not only obtained from the result of knowledge sharing on domestic agricultural practices, but also from abroad.

The participation of Ath-Thaariq pesantren in various events, including the Bhoomi Festival in New Delhi and The Soil Yatra in Indore and Nagpur, India on organic farming, and several annual events attended by Dzikir Al-Fath pesantren making these two pesantrens continue to learn.

Keeping up with the development of today's information technology, pesantrens have also used social media as a media of knowledge sharing. Through social media, pesantren open up a great potential by receiving suggestions and inputs as a form of learning valuable for the success of pesantren.

Other media for sharing knowledge is through books written by pesantren leaders. Leader of Dzikir Al-Fath is a productive leader in writing books. He does not only have privilege space to document his books in pesantren, but he also has published his books for public readers.

Another knowledge sharing media is conference which conducted by researchers based on the results of their research in these two pesantrens. The exposures of research results through international conferences have been carried out and resulted in inputs for pesantren. There are also learning media to understand empirically the existence of pesantren and efforts to share knowledge as a model in building pesantren as a sustainable learning organization.

V. KNOWLEDGE SHARING AS A MODEL IN BUILDING PESANTREN AS A SUSTAINABLE LEARNING ORGANIZATION

The dynamic of education which continues to change has demanded pesantrens as educational institutions to constantly develop and innovate. In an effort to understand the education in such accelerating development, pesantrens should position

themselves as institutions that must continually learn to explore the potential of their knowledge.

Pesantrens as educational institutions demand every individual involved to continue learning and practicing the knowledge they have as part of the form of pesantren's local wisdom. The learning process carried out is not only limited to one-way learning methods but in all ways possible. Thus, santri and ustadz are not focusing on one source of knowledge but allow each individual in the pesantren to continue learning from any good source available.

There are many open opportunities for pesantren to develop knowledge in the form of collaboration with academics, institutions, companies, and communities. The students are encouraged to continue innovating through new ideas in each of their activities. Such conditions will create a dynamic and innovative learning atmosphere. By involving all people of pesantren in every event held, pesantren has made significant contribution in encouraging each individual to constantly develop his/her potentials. Events with different themes are held regularly to accommodate the diversity of santri's interests and talents so that all the potentials of the pesantren can be optimally improved.

Pesantrens also develop various entrepreneurial units internally in the fields of agriculture, animal husbandry, medicine, and science and technology. Although the knowledge of the entrepreneurial units is broadly obtained from pesantren leaders, the santri are free to share their knowledge through the santri forums, both officially and informally. With the provision of this potential self-development unit, santri become an important part of the pesantren's big step to form a learning culture as part of the core culture of pesantren.

All knowledge sharing activities carried out in pesantrens through the science forum in internal pesantren, routine recitation, training, study visit, social media, formal studies, events, conferences, provision of reference books, conference activities, and other media, has shown that the two pesantrens studied can be considered as models of sustainable learning organizations.

VI. CONCLUSION

Pesantrens carry out *knowledge sharing* activities to share knowledge through scientific forums and other activities such as routine weekly recitation, training, study visit, social media, formal studies, events, conferences, provision of reference books, conference activities, and other media. Pesantrens leaders play a major role in the formation of pesantren as learning organizations by applying knowledge sharing as an enrichment model of science.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The researchers would like to thank the leaders of Ath-Thaariq pesantren in Garut and Dzikir Al-Fath in Sukabumi, Indonesia, which have given permission to the authors to conduct research at each pesantren; and they have made valuable contributions in providing information and data in this research activity.

The researchers are also grateful to the Directorate of Research and Community Service, Directorate General of Research and Development Strengthening, Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education, Republic of Indonesia, as a source of funding for this research, according to the Research Contract for Fiscal Year 2018.

REFERENCES

- [1] G. Abdul and G. Zakaria, "Pondok Pesantren: Changes and Its Future," *Journal of Islamic and Arabic Education*, vol. 2, 2010, pp. 45-52. 2018.
- [2] H. Cierna, E. Sujová, P. Hbek, E. Horská, and Z. Kapsdorferová, "Learning Organization at Higher Education Institutions in the EU: Proposal for Implementing Philosophy of Learning Organization--Results from Research," in *Quality and Quantity*, vol. 51, pp. 1305-1320, 2017.
- [3] J. M. Moyer, A. J. Sinclair and A. P. Diduck, "Learning for Sustainability Among Faith-Based Organizations in Kenya," *Environmental Management*, vol. 54, pp. 360-72, 2014.
- [4] M. B. Shahzad, "Is Pakistani Financial Services Are Using Learning Organization Techniques in Human Resource Development?" *Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review (Oman Chapter)*, vol. 5, pp. 72-84, 2016.
- [5] S. Limwichitr, J. Broady-Preston, and D. A. Ellis, "Discussion of Problems in Implementing Organisational Cultural Change" *Library Review*, vol. 64, pp. 480-488, 2015.
- [6] S. A. N. Tabatabaei and M. Ghorbi, "A Survey on Impact of Dimensions of Learning Organization on Employees' Performance; (Case Study: Economic Department of Iran Khodro Company)," *Kuwait Chapter of the Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review*, vol. 3, pp. 66-78, 2014.
- [7] M. Swift, D. B. Balkin, and S. F. Matusik, "Goal Orientations and The Motivation to Share Knowledge," *Journal of Knowledge Management*, vol. 14, pp. 378-393, 2010.
- [8] I. Hsu and Y. Wang, "A Model of Intra-organizational Knowledge Sharing: Development and Initial Test," *Journal of Global Information Management*, vol. 16, pp. 45-73, 2008.
- [9] W. Jiacheng, L. Lu, and C. A. Francesco, "A Cognitive Model of Intra-Organizational Knowledge-Sharing Motivations in The View of Cross-Culture," *International Journal of Information Management*, vol. 30, pp. 220-230, 2010.
- [10] S. Wang and R. A. Noe, "Knowledge Sharing: A Review and Directions for Future Research," *Human Resource Management Review*, vol. 20, pp. 115-131, 2010.
- [11] T. T. Luu, "Underneath Organizational Health and Knowledge Sharing," in *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, vol. 26, pp. 139-168, 2013.
- [12] I. Nonaka and N. Konno, "The Concept of 'Ba': Building A Foundation for Knowledge Creation," *California Management Review*, vol. 40, pp. 40-54, 1998.
- [13] M. Li and F. Gao, "Why Nonaka Highlights Tacit Knowledge: A Critical Review," *Journal of Knowledge Management*, vol. 7, pp. 6-14. 2003.
- [14] R. Hall and P. Andriani, "Managing Knowledge For Innovation," *Long Range Planning*, vol. 35, pp. 29-48, 2002.
- [15] A. R. Seidler-de and E. Hartmann, "The Use of Tacit Knowledge Within Innovative Companies: Knowledge Management in Innovative Enterprises" *Journal of Knowledge Management*, vol. 12, pp. 133-47, 2018.