Establishing Knowledge Sharing Culture in School: A Case on Sekolah Cikal

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ABSTRACT
Today’s era is widely recognized as the knowledge-based economy, which is characterized by the premise that knowledge is power. Information and knowledge have become the most important assets for the society. The one who possesses knowledge and information will win the competition and shape the life of the society. The school is at the heart of this new era of knowledge economy. Teachers are prime examples of knowledge workers, in that they have considerable personal discretion and responsibility in analyzing, developing, and implementing their curricular goals. Nevertheless, it is argued that many aspects of the teaching context work do not support the nurturing of knowledge sharing culture. Therefore, this study discusses the implementation of knowledge management in one of IB schools in Jakarta. In particular, this paper elaborates the initiative of knowledge sharing culture within the school as one of the most critical elements of knowledge management.

KEYWORDS: knowledge, management; sharing, culture, and school.

ABSTRAK
Era sekarang ini secara luas diakui sebagai ekonomi berbasis pengetahuan, yang ditandai dengan premis bahwa pengetahuan adalah kekuatan. Informasi dan pengetahuan telah menjadi aset yang paling penting bagi masyarakat. Orang yang memiliki pengetahuan dan informasi akan memenangkan persaingan dan bentuk kehidupan masyarakat. Sekolah adalah jantung dari era
baru ekonomi pengetahuan. Guru adalah contoh utama dari pengetahuan pekerja, dalam bahwa mereka memiliki kebijaksanaan pribadi yang cukup dan tanggung jawab dalam menganalisis, mengembangkan, dan menerapkan tujuan kurikuler mereka. Namun demikian, banyak aspek dari pekerjaan mengajar konteks tidak mendukung memelihara budaya berbagi pengetahuan. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini membahas penerapan manajemen pengetahuan di salah satu sekolah IB di Jakarta. Secara khusus, makalah ini menguraikan inisiatif budaya berbagi pengetahuan dalam sekolah sebagai salah satu elemen yang paling penting dari manajemen pengetahuan.

KATA KUNCI: pengetahuan, manajemen; berbagi, budaya, dan sekolah.

INTRODUCTION

Our society has evolved through four stages of living, from hunter and gatherer to agrarian then to industry and currently we are at the era of information and knowledge. This last phase is recognized as the era of knowledge economy, in which information and knowledge are the most important assets for the society. It is argued that knowledge is power; the one who possesses it will win the competition.

This has given some implications to the intensified attempts of information and knowledge acquisition and accumulation. People and organizations are racing to be the center of information and knowledge, by which this may provide them with the key to success.

This paper discusses this current phenomenon of knowledge-based organization within the field of education. The school is at the heart of this new era of knowledge economy. It is argued that teachers are prime examples of knowledge workers, in that they have considerable personal discretion and responsibility in analyzing, developing, and implementing their curricular goals.
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Many aspects of the teaching context work against this, although ongoing reform efforts are beginning to change the knowledge work perceptions of teachers and their organizations (Carol et al., 2001).

This study discusses the implementation of knowledge management in Sekolah Cikal. In particular, this paper elaborates the initiative of knowledge sharing within the school as one of the most critical elements of knowledge management: Factors that contribute to the success of the implementation of knowledge sharing and challenges that are faced in implementing the knowledge sharing.

Knowledge Sharing

The best practice is to encourage members of the organizations to be more creative and innovative through the mastering of knowledge. To ensure that this practice sustains, organizations establish and implement the knowledge management within the company. A requirement for any knowledge management system is that the knowledge workers who are developing and using an organization’s knowledge—as well as the organization itself—must recognize what constitutes knowledge and that the knowledge has value.

It is reported that the implementation of knowledge management has provided positive impacts, both on organizational performance as well as employees’ satisfaction. The value of a company will increase tremendously as the accumulation of knowledge rises. This value, which mostly is intangible, provides the knowledge-based companies with the most powerful source of
competitive advantage. Google, Facebook, Twitter, Apple are the leading knowledge-rich companies, which shape the new frontier of how society lives.

An organization builds knowledge through the activities and experiences of its employees. Some of this knowledge may become codified in the form of organizational mission statements, rules and procedures. But much of the knowledge exists in a more informal form, often represented in a tacit form as employee "know-how." Researchers have used the term knowledge worker to emphasize that individual employees typically bring a wealth of specific experiences and personal heuristics in selecting, planning, and carrying out their assigned tasks (Kidd, 1994).

Nevertheless, the implementation of knowledge management is not without any difficulties. One of its real challenges lies in the transfer of knowledge from one individual to another. The discontinuity of knowledge may stifle the growth of the company, which eventually will take its success away.

As advocated by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995), knowledge that resides within each individual is called as tacit knowledge, which is not structured, document based, or tangible. The challenge with tacit knowledge is that it is only accessible symbolically through individuals and is attainable only with extraordinary effort (Davenport & Prusak, 1998).

In order to make the tacit knowledge becomes explicit, many organizations establish the knowledge sharing initiatives. Research shows that a "willingness to share" is positively related to profitability and productivity and negatively related to labor cost (Jarvenpaa & Staples, 2000). Several programs have been adopted, including the use of storytelling and community-based
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forums. These initiatives have brought a new culture to the organizations; a knowledge sharing culture.

A “knowledge-sharing culture” is believed to be inherently good because of the growing importance of intellectual capital to organizations and the need for effective knowledge management practices (Gupta & Govindarajan, 2000). The introduction of knowledge sharing as a new culture is critical since culture can powerfully influence human behavior and because it is extremely hard to change (Kotter, 1996). It exerts its influence in numerous invisible ways—from the kinds of people who get hired, to the types of questions and comments that are tolerated, the formal and informal expectations made of staff, the focus of reward systems, how people interact, and when they ask for help (Gupta & Govindarajan, 2000).

Knowledge Sharing Culture at Sekolah Cikal

As a community of lifelong learner Sekolah Cikal have shown that knowledge attainment has become an important focus in their organizational vision and mission. The school has implemented both structural system and personal approach as their strategy to create sustain knowledge management. The structural system that has been applied includes a strict schedule of training session that need to be attended by all teachers. Every friday afternoon all teachers are obliged to be present at Share and Learn session. The session covers a variety of topics that are believed to be beneficial for teachers. This program is design as a peer learning whereas teacher who conduct this session will gain extra credit and acknowledgement from both supervisor and peer.
Another program is *Breakfast Club*, a knowledge sharing session that involve parents of the students. Every teacher is scheduled at least once a year to conduct this session. Teachers need to prepare their own materials including; choose interesting and useful topic, create a powerpoint presentation and have a discussion with the PIC beforehand. This program is a commitment from Cikal to create a community of practice that covers conversation, collaboration, connectivity and capability among all members.

Technology plays an important role in knowledge management at Sekolah Cikal. Information technology is employed to support infrastructure in delivering knowledge. Sekolah Cikal has successfully established community portal for parents where reports and news can be easily accessed by all parents. This community network enables Cikal to create a *Global Village*. Sekolah Cikal has also planned to introduce interactive learning program of *Moodle* in the near future. This web-base learning instruction collects lesson plan from teacher, conduct discussion, activity materials and grading.

Personal approach has also been utilized to convert Tacit Knowledge into Explicit Knowledge. The use of social media has transformed informal communication into written form that can be implemented to share knowledge. For example in Cikal West Building, teachers created a *Whatsapp* group named *Wesewes* to accommodate the exchange of information among teachers. From this group, teachers shared experience through socialization such as arrange lunch together to discuss current policies and how they as a group deal with the change. They learn, analyze and imitate each other’s strategy to overcome potential issues.
“From my experience in previous academic year, how to deal with this parents is to listen to them and give immediate response when required. You should be more patience and do not take things too personally” Ari

Whatsapp chat

Above is the example of how one teacher shares his strategy to handle one difficult parents. Other teacher will absorb those information and apply the strategy when they are facing similar issues.

Other whatsapp group is Year 5 2013-2014, a group of year 5 teachers that consists of 4 members. This group shared more formal information than the previous one do. The level coordinator will give information through this group and all member will record the information accordingly.

“Minutes of meeting: gentle reminder all diagnostic report should be distributed on 29 november 2013. Please include action plan for each subject that need to be improved” Puspa, level coordinator, Whatsapp chat

The use of indirect conversation also play an important role in transforming tacit into explicit knowledge. Analogy, modelling and observation from the leader is put into one popular quotation from Cikal “Practice what we preach”.

Success Factors

Cikal successfully builds knowledge sharing culture due to several reasons. Teachers as knowledge worker have been the most critical factors.
Having more than 10 Master Degree teachers, and several post-graduate candidates, Cikal has been established as community of learners.

“We are probably teacher as a title, but we actually a continuous learner” Evy, Year 3 Teacher, Master in Education.

Cikal encourages teacher to take part in Global Knowledge Sharing. Cikal has sent teachers to IB (International Baccalaureate) conference both domestic and overseas, regularly. Previously, four teachers from Cikal became one of the presenters in TEFL (Teaching English as Foreign Language) in Manila, The Philippines. It is a mandatory that teachers who take part in training, conference or workshop to conduct a Share and Learn session to share their knowledge.

Teachers of Cikal are a group of enthusiast and thirst of knowledge as reflected in one IB in house training deliver by Ms. Helen Morchel. The responses were very good and everybody still managed to talk about it even after more than 6 months.

Challenges

Creating a knowledge sharing culture has faced several barriers. One of the key obstacles is when teachers are occupied with a lot of administrative work. Teachers can be overwhelmed with day-to-day task and routine therefore this leave no room for self actualization and opportunity to learn. Teachers need to juggle between attending seminars, workshop or training with deadlines of paperwork. Furthermore they need to conduct a sharing session after the training which means another time disadvantages.
Another challenge is the lack of trust. Teachers have missed the most important point that knowledge is perishable. Teachers have failed to trust the school that they have been treated properly. Teachers believe that the school have took advantages of their knowledge therefore they are reluctant to share. One of the key obstacles in building knowledge sharing culture is that teachers are failed to appreciate the importance of their contribution in the development and conservation of their recources.

CONCLUSION

From the above discussion, we might be able to infer some knowledge sharing behaviour. As we all aware that schools are organization that treasure knowledge, every member of a school has roles and responsibility to find innovative ways to deal with problems in the development of a better environment to create and conserve knowledge.

It is evidenced within Sekolah Cikal that knowledge sharing culture emerges when the school as a community of practice is able to establish conversation, collaboration, commitment, connectivity and capability between all members to share and conserve knowledge.

One of the key success factors in building knowledge sharing culture within Sekolah Cikal is when members of the school have the same values, beliefs and behaviour that encourage the sharing of knowledge and to appreciate their contribution in the development of knowledge preservation.

Several strategies to build knowledge sharing culture within the school include: Socialization, Externalization, Combination, and Internalization. These strategies need to be executed thoroughly since it is reported that the
availability of time for teachers to complete the knowledge sharing initiatives is limited. This has given implications to nurture the knowledge sharing culture within the school.

REFERENCES


