

## **Knowledge Sharing In Libraries: A Case Study of Knowledge Sharing Strategies in Indonesian University Libraries**

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### **Abstract:**

*Knowledge sharing is believed by many organizations as a panacea for knowledge creation, and an important activity to boost innovation, improve productivity, and increase understanding among knowledge workers. Knowledge sharing has become a crucial activity in knowledge management, and it is adopted by many organizations especially in the develop countries. In Indonesia, they are not many organization that implement knowledge management, however knowledge sharing is quite popular and starting to be used by organization including library. There are not many libraries in Indonesia that implement knowledge management initiative formally, however, some libraries conducting knowledge sharing regularly and that has become a formal program in the library. Many libraries have knowledge sharing initiative for many purposes, and they have different strategies when conducting knowledge sharing. This paper is investigating the knowledge sharing strategies, the technology that they use, and the knowledge sharing purposes and benefits, as well as the knowledge sharing obstacles in university libraries in Indonesia. There are 5 university libraries that implement knowledge sharing. The purposes of this paper are, (1) to describes the knowledge sharing strategies in those libraries; (2) to describes the technology and facility that support knowledge sharing in those libraries; (3) to explain the purposes and benefits of knowledge sharing for the librarians and the libraries; (4) to explain the obstacles during the knowledge sharing implementation, (5) to describe how the knowledge documentation process and how the knowledge reuse. The paper output is a recommendation of knowledge sharing best practices that can be used by other libraries in order to enhance their productivity. The research methodology is using quantitative approach, and the research population is all university libraries in Surabaya, while the sample criteria is university libraries that already conduct knowledge sharing regularly at least for 12 months. The main data gathering is by interviewing the head and staff of the libraries and knowledge sharing coordinators by using semi structured questionnaires. The research results are, those libraries have different names of the knowledge-sharing program, and they allocate regular time for knowledge sharing. Furthermore, some libraries use social media for knowledge sharing and building a knowledge worker group. All library staffs are encouraged*

*to get involved in knowledge sharing. The aims of knowledge sharing are to share best practices and lesson learned, the librarians also share their knowledge about theory daily task, how to solve problem, and ideas for the library development. The knowledge sharing obstacles are, not many librarians can express their ideas (shy/silent), and some of participants treat this sharing activity as a mandatory activity. However, those libraries did not implement open access for their knowledge that is created from knowledge sharing.*

**Keywords:** knowledge sharing, university library, knowledge sharing in library, knowledge management

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## **Introduction**

Knowledge sharing is strongly associated with knowledge management, and there are not many organizations that have already implement a formal knowledge management in Indonesia. Only several multinational private organizations or government in the form of State-Owned Enterprises (BUMN) such as PT *Telkom* /Telecommunication Indonesia (Hapsari, 2010) PT Java-Bali Power Plan (PJB Jawa-Bali) (Saraswati, 2010), PT PLN/electricity Indonesia (Hakim, 2013) that are already implement knowledge management. Those organizations are public service organization--public service and profit oriented organizations. However, for non-profit organizations that implement knowledge management is still rare, especially library that implements knowledge management. Despite of this, many organizations are pioneering initiative for making knowledge sharing for some reasons, for example to boost innovation both products and services (Irdiani, 2012). But along with the global economic and information age urges libraries to adopt knowledge sharing in order to enhance knowledge creation. Library is the same as other organizations, through knowledge sharing, it can accelerate the process of knowledge creation and reuse of knowledge, so the library services and products are constantly evolving.

In Indonesia, the library is still perceived as a book storage and lending by some people, incomplete and out of date collections (Kusumawati, 2010), as a place for problematic employees (Latif, 2011; Prasetyo, 2013), while the librarian profession is often considered as a less promising by the young generation. This is supported by poor library condition, such as the school library condition in Surabaya (Karnaji, et.al., 2012), the monotonous product and services in library such as unsatisfactory OPAC (Purnawati, 2008), spatial design that is less support user's comfort (Purnawati, 2008 ), and lack of human resources creativities.

From the illustration above, it is clear that library need to reform their product and services as well as their image and brand. This possibly will happen if the library

employees have knowledge and always create a new knowledge. Those new knowledge is easily created if people would share with other. Therefore, now some libraries in Surabaya conduct formal knowledge sharing, which means that the activity has become a part of the library management policies. Right now, there is one knowledge sharing activity between university librarians / community of practice already initiated under Indonesia university libraries Forum (FPPTI). FPPTI was founded in 2000 and is supported by the national library as a place where all university libraries can share and develop a good library.

Among many libraries that are still oriented to traditional concepts, there are some libraries that already have more advanced vision by applying knowledge sharing with various purposes, especially enhancing knowledge creation among staff in order to be able to produce both products and services innovation in the libraries.

This paper aims to describe the knowledge sharing strategy by some university libraries in Surabaya. First, is to define purpose or motivation of conducting knowledge sharing, following that is describing the types of knowledge sharing activities, facilities are used in knowledge sharing, documentation process of the knowledge sharing results, and knowledge sharing barriers during the implementation.

## **Literature Review**

### **Knowledge worker and knowledge sharing**

Knowledge worker is responsible for the creation and growth of innovation, and knowledge worker should be able to create products and services for the organization and the most important is creating a strategy. (Davenport, 2005). All employees can be categorized as a knowledge worker, this is because all employees hold information and knowledge in which it can contributes to the organization, but there is an important condition to make an employees as knowledge worker, there are the equal access to information and omit gaps between employees in the organization (Rosen, 2011). From the above results, the librarian can be categorized as a knowledge worker as a librarian is the library engine, in which the library progress and drawback are at the hands of the librarian.

To encourage the knowledge creation, a knowledge worker needs to perform knowledge sharing. Knowledge sharing is not like when we cut a cake into some pieces and distribute them for the entire people who share. But each individual brings

a cake and came back with a bigger one, that is knowledge sharing. Knowledge sharing is about working together, helping each other, and collaborate, as Peter Senge revealed that knowledge sharing is not limited to what is given by others, and what we will get, but when there is someone who volunteered to help others (colleagues) to build new capacity which results in action, and knowledge sharing is like a the learning process (Gurteen.com).

### **Knowledge sharing strategy**

Based on the knowledge sharing tools, it mentions that there is no one particular strategy for successful knowledge sharing. Knowledge sharing strategy should be adapted to the conditions and the context in which the organization is located. It is better to choose strategy by involving the audiences; because of the successful of knowledge sharing depends on the role and contribution of the entire audiences. There are some alternatives to determine a proper knowledge sharing strategy, those are (1) choose knowledge sharing strategy by looking at a variety of strategies, not depend on one strategy, (2) defines the purposes of knowledge sharing, (3) pay attention on knowledge broker and leader in knowledge sharing, (4) and determine the knowledge sharing strategy (Tsui, 2006).

### **Research Methodology**

This study uses a quantitative approach with descriptive methods. Descriptive method is used to describe the strategy of sharing knowledge (knowledge sharing) in the university libraries in Indonesia. The population of this research is all university libraries in Surabaya, the number of the university in Surabaya is 60 universities both private and public (Surabaya.go.id). The sampling taking technique used purposive sampling method with some criteria (1) university library that conduct knowledge sharing formally and routine, (2) at least implement knowledge sharing for one year. The sample comes up to five university libraries, Airlangga University (Unair), University of Christian of Petra (UK Petra), University of SURabaya (Ubaya), Institut Technology of Sepuluh November Surabaya (ITS), and Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Ekonomi Perbanas (STIE Perbanas). The data and information gathering is through questionnaires that send to the head of the libraries and some library employees. In addition, to gain more in-depth information, we interview some of the head librarians and library employees.

## Data Finding and Discussion

The data and information that has been collected is shown in the table below. The table comprises of information about five university libraries with ten categories.

**Table 1. Knowledge sharing strategy in academic libraries**

Category	Unair	ITS	Ubaya	UK Petra	STIE Perbanas
Knowledge sharing activity	Morning Aspiration & Librarian meeting	Morning enlightenment	Library Internal Discussion	Morning Sharing	Morning Motivation
Number of employee	70	42	36	22	5
Knowledge sharing objectives	(1) to share knowledge about library activities (2) to share the seminar / workshop / training experience and knowledge	(1) to share the seminar / workshop / training experience and knowledge, (2) to share the library and university policy (3) to increase confidence among staff (4) as a evaluation media for staffs	(1) to share the seminar / workshop / training experience and knowledge, (2) to share the library and university policy, (3) to solve problem in the library	(1) to share knowledge about library activities and information technology (2) to increase collaboration among staff	(1) to increase communication and collaboration among staff (2) to solve problem in the library, (3) to build creative works culture
Knowledge sharing schedule	Every Tuesday morning 07.15-08.00	Every morning from 08.00-08.30	Every three months on Saturday morning	Every morning from 7.30-08.00	Every day during semester break
Information technology	Social network media (facebook)	Web portal	e-mail	Mailing list, e-mail	Intranet / LAN
Knowledge sharing facilities	Conference room; computer; LCD projector	Library lobby (public area)	Conference room, coffee break/snack, LCD projector	Conference room, LCD projector	Conference room
Strategy to motivate staff to do knowledge sharing	To point out some knowledge broker / coordinator to motivate all library staffs	The program is compulsory for all library staffs	The program is compulsory for all library staffs	(1) The program is compulsory for all library staffs (2) To point out a PIC to ensure the program is running (3) support from the head of the library	(1) The program is compulsory for all library staffs (2) support from the head of the library, (3) create family work culture
knowledge sharing barriers	Lack of documentation of the knowledge sharing result	(1) Lack of time, (2) many staffs not ready to do knowledge sharing, (3) there is no support to do open access	Lack of staff commitment	(1) Lack of staff commitment, (2) Lack of documentation of the knowledge sharing result	Lack of time

Documen- tion of knowledge sharing	Rarely done	(1) paper-based monthly report, (2) digital report uploaded in ITS digital library	Paper-based report and it is saved on the secretariat	Digital report (soft-file) and it is saved on the coordinator computer	Paper and digital (file) based report that is saved in the staff server
Knowl- edge reuse	Rarely staffs are use those knowledge	Staff can easily download the document from the digital library	Staffs might borrow the document from secretariat	Staffs need permission from the coordinator to use those documents	Staff can easily access the document through intranet / LAN

### **Knowledge sharing objectives**

The five libraries objective to conduct knowledge sharing is almost the same, in which, knowledge sharing as a medium of communication between library employees and as a place of knowledge and experience exchange. By implementing knowledge sharing will creates a continuous communication between the employees, especially in solving the problem occur in the library. Another purpose is to increase cooperation and collaboration among employees in the university libraries in Surabaya. Furthermore, the purpose of knowledge sharing is to share the results of the seminar / training / workshop conducted by library employees so that all employees have a new insight about the latest issues in librarianship. Next is to share knowledge about the daily activities and solve problems that arise, so from these results can be used as an evaluation for all the library works.

### **Facilities and Information Technology**

The facilities provided by the library to support knowledge sharing is quite diverse, in ITS using public space (lobby) as a place to conduct knowledge sharing every morning. While the other four libraries provide conference room for knowledge sharing. By using library lobby for morning enlightenment the librarian feel much relax because there is no gap between employees. Every employee can contribute in the morning enlightenment without being underestimate by others. All participants stood in circle and it makes them know each other, the atmosphere also very friendly, less formal but serious. Mean while Ubaya chooses Saturday morning to do knowledge sharing, and the library supports the program by providing facilities such as a discussion room and some food and coffee for the participants. Other supports is by providing the information technology devices such as computers, LCD projector for presentations, internet connection, LAN development, and mailing lists, all of those are intended to allow the implementation of knowledge sharing runs well. Just like in

STIE Perbanas that uses intranet to save all files from knowledge sharing so all employees can access those files easily. UK Petra build a mailing list for its employees as a media to remind them about knowledge sharing activities as well as a place to discuss problem and share the knowledge sharing result. Unair Library, using social network media (facebook) to support the sharing process outside the formal agenda, so it does not depend only on the face-to-face meeting every Tuesday morning.

Information technology is important to support knowledge sharing, especially in the digital age. It allows all employees to share in their free time and anytime. But, technology is not the best solution for the successful of knowledge sharing. Still the employees and their organizational culture that bring a vital role in knowledge sharing. As describing above, all of the libraries only equipped with very basic information technology and discussion room during knowledge sharing process. This is because, the libraries try to develop a knowledge sharing culture among library employees.

### **How to Motivate employees to conduct knowledge sharing**

To motivate the entire employees to play an active role in knowledge sharing requires the right strategy, because knowledge sharing is not only activities for managers, but for the entire organization member. From the five libraries, they all involving the library policy as a tool to force all employees to do knowledge sharing. It is means that knowledge sharing activity is compulsory to be attended by the all library employees. But until now there is no library that applying specific punishment for them who do not attending the knowledge sharing, as well as the lack of reward systems for them who active or contribute in knowledge sharing. According to (King, 2006) states that supervisory control is needed to support knowledge sharing through the organization's policies, such as embedded in contract which said that all knowledge and information generated by employee belongs to the organization. Supervisory control is highly dependent on the strong leadership and the use of power to force members to contribute.

Some researchers claim that the reward or incentive system could increase a person's motivation in doing knowledge sharing, but reward system also considered able to build negative habit such as a habit to hold knowledge they have (Pearisamy, 2006). To encourage staffs to do knowledge sharing, it needs to be given the opportunity to got intrinsic rewards such as opportunity to go to conferences,

trainings, or recognition (Sutton, 2009). Reward system is still considered to be the easiest strategy to be implemented but with a note giving rewards that educate and support the ongoing activities of knowledge sharing.

In addition, the role of the leader and the appointment of knowledge broker also driving employees to conduct knowledge sharing. As stated by (Huisman & deWit, 2002) that the knowledge broker role is very important, where it can be a connector between knowledge sharing participants by always approaching various groups in the organization to play an active role in doing the sharing.

### **Knowledge sharing obstacles**

The biggest obstacles experienced by the five libraries are time limitation to do knowledge sharing. Knowledge sharing is compulsory for all employees, and gathering 22 people (UK Petra) to 42 people (ITS) every morning is not an easy task, STIE Perbanas also experiences the same problem, with only 5 staffs to serve a big university library it takes almost all their time on work. Perceived the time constraint drives STIE Perbanas conduct knowledge sharing during semester breaks only, similar to UBAYA that held knowledge sharing every 3 months. Unair Library sharing activity held once a week every Tuesday morning in the central library and followed by all library employees from others branches. Besides the time limitation, many knowledge sharing participants come late to the event and the unpunctual knowledge sharing forum also become a problem. Furthermore, Unair and ITS have another obstacles such as many library employees are not confident to speak it the forum. Time constraints are often the reason for someone do not share (Lindsey, 2006), communication is also a barrier why people won't share.

### **Documentation system**

In addition to knowledge sharing activity itself, documenting the results of knowledge sharing is one important step to support the knowledge creation process. The results of knowledge sharing should be organized into organizational knowledge that can be accessed by all library employees in the future. According to data finding, most libraries did not process or organize the knowledge sharing result seriously, they only put emphasis on the knowledge sharing for knowledge exchange. The absence of documentation and organization of knowledge that makes the open access is almost impossible. Libraries hold not many knowledge resources as a result of knowledge sharing activities. We can say that open access initiatives is still a long way to go as

long as those libraries did not aware and put more attention about documentation system seriously. In this case those libraries only build knowledge sharing without planning the long-term benefits, especially as a organizational learning process. The results of knowledge sharing only reports stored in the server computer or in the secretariat. Even though ITS libraries have started storing their knowledge product in digital library portal that can be accessed by all employees, but the portal is better called as institutional repository rather than knowledge product from knowledge sharing activities. Knowledge sharing is one of the activities for the knowledge creation, where the whole process is carried out, among others, the creation from tacit –tacit (socialization), tacit-explicit (externalization), explicit-tacit (internalization), and explicit-explicit (combination) (Nonaka, 2007). Documentation process is one form of implementation of the translating tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge, so people can easily understand of other people knowledge.

### **Knowledge reuse**

Knowledge sharing is useless unless it used by all employees in organization or they take advantages from that activity. When knowledge product is rarely used by the employees to help them with the work, solve problem, or make innovation in the library, it means that the knowledge sharing is less successful. In conjunction with reusing knowledge, STIE Perbanas and ITS provide the widest access for employees to utilize the knowledge sharing results through the intranet and digital library portal. They can search and download the desired information without any permission from authorized staff. While at Ubaya and UK Petra, employees who like to utilize the knowledge product should have permission to access from the head of sub-section where the document (the information) is stored, or should come directly to the secretariat room. For Unair, library staffs rarely access the information or knowledge product on the results of knowledge sharing, because they do not really get benefit from that knowledge. Knowledge reuse is very useful in the creation of a product or innovation; and through the knowledge reuse can foster organizational innovation without having to repeat the process from the beginning (Oshri, 2006).

### **Conclusion & Recommendation**

Knowledge sharing has not been formally adopted by many libraries in Surabaya, only some libraries that have been implemented. But in the process of implementation of knowledge sharing, libraries in Surabaya are still not maximized, it is visible from the strategy that only focuses on the implementation of knowledge

sharing (face to face meeting) or just to share the results of the seminar / training without considering knowledge sharing as a complex process for knowledge creation. While the long term and the most important goal in knowledge sharing which is the creation of new knowledge and innovation has not been so visible. Likewise, information technology and facilities are very basic such as discussion room with its equipment (computer, LCD projector), some libraries support knowledge sharing with computer and internet networks, there still needs application that encourages collaboration virtually. Libraries are not applying reward systems / incentives for staff who contributed in knowledge sharing, it is also triggers some staffs to reduce their contribution or intention to come to the knowledge sharing forum. Finally, all parties should easily access the results of knowledge sharing but those libraries has not made knowledge reuse and open access maximally. Those libraries only considers knowledge sharing is only as information exchange activity, not as a knowledge creating activity.

Suggestion for the library, (1) to be more serious in planning the knowledge sharing strategy in accordance with the intended goal. (2) to involved leadership and knowledge brokers as much as possible to support the successful of knowledge-sharing, (3) provide the right rewards / incentives that can spring the knowledge creation of among staff, (4) encourage open access to all the knowledge products that is created during knowledge sharing through the Internet, so that all parties can mutually learn from the results, (5) encouraging the creation of knowledge (documentation) as well as providing access to those knowledge for future use.

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