

Exploring Knowledge Sharing, Retention, and Production in Indonesian Islamic Universities: A Case Study Approach

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the processes of knowledge sharing, retention, and production within Indonesian Islamic universities, employing a case study approach. The research prioritizes qualitative data collected through interviews, observations, and documentation studies. Data analysis involved descriptive methods based on events observed during field activities. Findings reveal that knowledge sharing among lecturers primarily revolves around interaction, communication, and the exchange of information, knowledge, and experiences both face-to-face and virtually. Policies at the faculty and program levels facilitate these activities, emphasizing the collaboration between senior and junior lecturers in research and community service. Knowledge production is inherently linked to knowledge sharing and retention, occurring organically within the university setting. However, the contribution and intervention of faculties and study programs remain limited. Enhanced involvement of faculties and programs in implementing knowledge management practices is essential for improving overall performance. Consequently, it is imperative for universities to adopt knowledge management as a foundational aspect of their operations.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Knowledge is a critical resource within any organization, including universities. Like infrastructure, finances, and human resources, knowledge—both explicit and tacit—is integral to the operational and strategic success of an institution. Explicit knowledge, which is easily documented and shared, complements tacit knowledge, which resides within individuals and is often challenging to articulate. In the context of universities, knowledge encompasses academic expertise, research findings, and educational methodologies, all of which are vital for fostering innovation and maintaining academic excellence. The effective management and utilization of knowledge resources are essential for universities to achieve their educational and research objectives. Therefore, understanding the processes of knowledge sharing, retention, and production among university members is crucial for enhancing institutional performance and promoting a culture of continuous improvement and collaboration.

The importance of knowledge in an organization has become the center of attention of various organizations, including universities, in recent decades. Knowledge is an important asset that enables universities to become learning organizations, fostering continuous improvement through their members (Senge, 1990). The productivity, effectiveness, and efficiency of higher education institutions in achieving their goals are believed to be realized through effective knowledge management (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). Recent studies further emphasize that the strategic management of knowledge resources is critical for maintaining competitive advantage and fostering innovation in academic settings (Carvalho et al., 2021). By managing knowledge effectively, universities can harness the collective expertise of their faculty and staff, thereby enhancing their ability to innovate and maintain academic excellence (Drucker, 1993).

The importance of knowledge for an organization has been recognized by both experts and academics and practitioners. Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995, Teigland, 2003 in Zboralski, 2009) stated that maintaining and storing knowledge (knowledge *retention*) as well as sharing knowledge (knowledge sharing) and producing new knowledge (new knowledge production) is something important for the effectiveness and efficiency of the organization and also for the success of the organization in achieving organizational goals. Knowledge management is defined as a proactive and systematic process where value is generated from intellectual or knowledge-based assets and disseminated to stakeholders (Hermanto, 2018). Scarborough et al. (1999) defines Knowledge management as, "... there is a process or practice for creating, acquiring, capturing, sharing and using knowledge, wherever it resides, to improve learning and performance in organizations. Nonaka & Takeuchi (1995) mengidentifikasi empat kemungkinan mode: sosialisasi (socialization), eksternalisasi (externalization), kombinasi (combination), dan internalisasi (internalization) atau biasa disingkat SECI.

In the context of Indonesia, the urgency of knowledge management in organizations, especially government organizations including universities, has been regulated by the issuance of Menpan RB regulation number 14 of 2011 concerning guidelines for the implementation of knowledge management programs. One of the objectives of the issuance of this regulation is to encourage ministries or state institutions and local governments to actively participate in *knowledge sharing* that can be utilized in policy formulation and *benchmarking* the implementation of bureaucratic reform. The issuance of this ministerial regulation illustrates how important *knowledge management* is for government organizations, including universities, more specifically Islamic universities.

Unfortunately, knowledge has not become the center of attention or priority of universities in Indonesia, including Islamic universities. Knowledge is not yet considered an important asset like other assets such as infrastructure, finance, and so on. Knowledge management has not been high on the agenda for Islamic universities. Islamic universities still focus more on managing conventional assets such as infrastructure, finance and so on. Though knowledge management is an important activity for every organization including Islamic universities in order to achieve goals, effectiveness and efficiency of the organization. Islamic universities are required to become Learning *Organizations*, learning organizations, so that they can and are able to compete with other universities, both at home and abroad.

So it is very natural if there have not been many studies on knowledge management in Islamic universities. Even if there are, these studies are still general, for example research on the implementation/process of knowledge management in Islamic universities (Sulastri & Mohammed, 2016). The other research is still partial, only in certain aspects of Islamic universities, for example knowledge management research in libraries (L.T, 2017; Lolytasari, 2017; Prabowo, 2016; Rodin, 2013). Therefore, it is necessary to conduct more comprehensive studies on knowledge management, especially related to three main activities in knowledge management as disclosed above, namely knowledge sharing, knowledge *retention*, and *knowledge production*.

IAIN Surakarta, a State Islamic Religious College under the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, has experienced significant physical and academic development in recent years, especially since its transition from STAIN to IAIN in 2011. One key indicator of its academic growth,

though not the sole measure, is its accreditation status. IAIN Surakarta holds an institutional accreditation of B, reflecting a solid institutional standing. Additionally, it boasts eight majors or study programs with A accreditation, four of which are within the Faculty of Tarbiyah (FIT), the largest faculty at IAIN Surakarta, accommodating approximately 4,890 students and 78 permanent lecturers (LPM IAIN Surakarta, 2018; forlap dikti, 2018).

Conversely, UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta holds an Institutional A accreditation. It features 50 departments or study programs, with 32 A-accredited and 28 B-accredited programs. The development in both universities highlights the implementation of effective knowledge management, as evidenced by their accreditation statuses, which reflect the performance of their human resources.

The gap in current research lies in the limited comparative analysis of knowledge management practices—specifically knowledge sharing, retention, and production—between these two institutions. Understanding these processes is crucial as they significantly impact the performance and competitiveness of higher education institutions. Previous studies have emphasized the strong dependence of higher education on human resources, particularly lecturers, who are pivotal in driving institutional activities and generating knowledge (Wahyudi & Sunarsi, 2021; Agarwal & Marouf, 2014).

The novelty of this study is its focus on the detailed examination of knowledge management practices in two prominent Islamic universities in Indonesia, providing insights into their strategies for leveraging human capital to achieve academic excellence. Effective knowledge management is essential for enhancing university performance, not merely relying on physical infrastructure but also on developing human resources (Butnariu & Milosan, 2012).

This study aims to examine the processes of knowledge sharing, retention, and production within the Faculty of Tarbiyah (FIT) at IAIN Surakarta and the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training (FITK) at UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta. The objective is to understand how these processes contribute to improving the quality of Islamic universities. Based on the background and identified gap, the central research question is: How do the processes of knowledge sharing, knowledge retention, and knowledge production at FIT IAIN Surakarta and FITK UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta contribute to the improvement of the quality of Islamic universities?

2. METHODS

This research employs a field research approach, prioritizing qualitative data to gain a deep understanding of knowledge management practices. The study focuses on two primary research objects: the Faculty of Tarbiyah (FIT) at IAIN Surakarta and the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training (FITK) at UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta. Key informants include deans, deputy deans, heads of study programs, and lecturers, selected through snowball sampling techniques. This method ensures that the sample is representative of the population, thereby providing a comprehensive reference for the total population.

Data collection techniques encompass interviews, observations, and document studies. Interviews are conducted with stakeholders within the faculties, supported by lecturers and leaders at the study program level. Using structured interview techniques, the research gathers detailed information on the processes of knowledge sharing, retention, and production. Questions are designed to explore how these practices are implemented and their impact on the institutions' academic performance.

Observations are conducted in various settings, such as lecturer offices, conference rooms, and other relevant areas, employing non-participant observation techniques. These observations help contextualize the data obtained from interviews by providing insights into the physical environment and daily interactions that support knowledge management.

Document studies involve the analysis of accreditation documents, academic journals, and other relevant records. These documents provide additional context and evidence to support the findings from interviews and observations, ensuring a triangulated approach to data collection.

Data analysis is carried out by systematically describing the events and interactions observed during field activities. This involves a cyclical and interactive process, where data collection and analysis occur simultaneously. This approach allows for continuous refinement of the research focus based on emerging insights, as described by Matthew et al. (2021). The iterative nature of this process ensures that the analysis remains closely aligned with the lived experiences and practices of the participants, providing a rich and nuanced understanding of knowledge management in these universities.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Implementation of Knowledge Sharing at FIT IAIN Surakarta and FITK UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta

The *knowledge sharing* process has occurred both at FIT IAIN Surakarta and at FITK UIN Sunan Kalijaga. At least there are some things related to *knowledge sharing* that occur in the two faculties. The first relates to space or space. Space is important in the knowledge sharing process. The process of interaction between individuals can occur in such spaces. Space here is not only limited to space in physical form such as space or office where individuals are located, but can also be non-physical or virtual where individuals can interact and communicate. In the context of physical space, lecturers in both faculties are in one room, as well as the head of study program and secretary of study program are in the same room with the lecturers. The difference is that the lecturers of study programs at FIT IAIN Surakarta are in one room alone, while the lecturers of study programs at FITK UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta in one large room contains two study programs. Another difference is that the study program lecturer room at IAIN Surakarta is not blocked or limited while the lecturer room at UIN Sunan Kalijaga is partitioned. However, the process of interaction and communication between lecturers in the two faculties went well. This allows a knowledge sharing process between lecturers in one room. The setting of a lecturer room like this is enough to support the process of knowledge sharing, where lecturers can freely and naturally carry out social interaction and communication, can share knowledge, experience, expertise owned by each lecturer.

Next is space that is not physically formed. Advances in the world of technology in certain respects can help the process of *knowledge sharing* in an organization including universities. One of them is whatsapp media (WA). The lecturers in these two faculties have used wa as a medium of interaction and communication. They form groups based on study programs, expertise, positions, and so on. The existence of these groups is very good for encouraging the process of *Knowledge sharing*. For example, in the ongoing PPG program in both faculties where it is already using online. Each lecturer who teaches this PPG activity makes a group according to the modules taught. In the group there is a learning process, a process of sharing between lecturers. There are lecturers who do not understand certain things in the online system lecture process, then other lecturers can help, and so on.

Virtual space is used by lecturers with students as a medium of communication and dissemination of knowledge. In its distribution, WhatsApp can share knowledge in various file forms such as messages, videos, PDFs, sounds, and others. This media is effectively used in communication that only requires smartphones and the internet. In order to build joint communication, lecturers can make groups according to their needs. According to Harahap (2018) and Sukrillah (2017) said the use of social media Whatapping WhatApp Group is very large, besides functioning to convey information, it also functions as a medium of discussion and educating, as a medium of entertainment, as well as a medium to provide influence and policy making in the educational environment.

The second is related to activities that can encourage the process of *knowledge sharing* between lecturers in the two faculties. These activities include discussions, seminars, workshops, and so on. These activities are certainly something that is mandatory for a college. These activities are routinely carried out every year. At FIT IAIN Surakarta, for example, there are faculty lecturer discussion

activities that are held once a month. This activity invites speakers from internal lecturers at FIT itself with material that is the result of thoughts, or the results of research and service carried out by lecturers. While at FITK UIN Sunan Kalijaga there are no lecturer discussions at the faculty level but at the institute level which is held regularly every month. However, there are also informal lecturer discussion groups at the faculty level carried out by lecturers in one study program or across study programs, namely lecturer discussions carried out by lecturers who have the same interests. Other activities such as seminars, workshops, training, are routine activities carried out at faculties both at IAIN Surakarta and at UIN Sunan Kalijaga.

The third is related to groups of lecturers who gather, or are in one group in carrying out the tri darma of higher education, namely education and teaching, research, and community service. The existence of these groups is important. Groups of lecturers who gather, discussing something related to their objectives is a very good thing in encouraging *knowledge sharing*. Whether it's lecturer groups formed by faculties or lecturer groups formed by themselves based on similar interests or expertise. At FIT IAIN Surakarta in the lecture process there is no teaching team, but lecturers are encouraged to meet and discuss the courses they teach, especially the same courses. Likewise, in FITK UIN Sunan Kalijaga, the teaching team only exists in the S2 program while in the S1 program there is none. However, lecturers who teach the same course are encouraged to meet and discuss the syllabus and RPS lectures so that there is a common perception of the courses they teach.

Next are research groups and lecturer service. The existence of groups of lecturers in research and service is important in the process of *knowledge sharing*. The lecturers can share many things related to the research and service they do. Not just sharing in their own groups but sharing between groups. At IAIN Surakarta, for example, the implementation of lecturer research activities is centered on LP2M, while for service activities there are those in LP2M and some in the faculty. Most of the existing research is group research consisting of at least two lecturers. Likewise, research activities held at LP2M are also group service. The lecturers form their own groups according to their interests and expertise, can be from their own study programs or faculties or across study programs and faculties. The plurality of members in the research group and the service of lecturers is certainly a good thing in the context of *knowledge sharing*. The existence of different group members with different study program backgrounds, faculties, and/or expertise can enrich the lecturers' insights with each other. This also happened at FITK UIN Sunan Kalijaga. Research and lecturer service activities are centered in LP2M, where all activities are group consisting of at least two lecturers from the same study program or faculty or across study programs and across faculties. While at FIT IAIN Surakarta also carries out lecturer service activities. Where this activity is intended for each study program, and is carried out in groups. These service groups must consist of senior and junior lecturers with the hope that there will be a learning process between lecturers in one group and also between groups.

What is interesting from the findings in this knowledge sharing process is that technology has encouraged and contributed to the implementation of knowledge sharing, where social media, especially WhatsApp becomes a very effective and efficient media in carrying out knowledge sharing between lecturers, both at the study program level, across study programs, and other groups where lecturers have the same interest.

3.2. Implementation of Knowledge Retention at FIT IAIN Surakarta and FITK UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta

Knowledge retention or storing knowledge is an important thing and an integral part of the knowledge management process, namely how the knowledge, expertise, experience possessed by each individual in an organization (in terms of lecturers of FIT IAIN Surakarta and FITK UIN Sunan Kalijaga) can be stored and become organizational knowledge. Knowledge retention can occur through humans and non-humans (Prusak, 2009). However, knowledge retention through humans or members of organizations as human capital is paramount in an organization, including universities (see Grant, 1996 in Key, 1996). FIT IAIN Surakarta and FITK UIN Sunan Kalijaga have made a policy to maintain

their lecturers to continue teaching in both faculties. At IAIN Surakarta, for example, alumni alumni and extraordinary lecturers who have more abilities, experience and expertise needed by FIT are maintained to continue working at FIT. This also applies at FITK UIN Sunan Kalijaga. The existence of lecturers who have the abilities and expertise needed by the faculty is maintained, and as much as possible made permanent lecturers at FITK UIN Sunan Kalijaga.

Other media in storing knowledge is through non-human media in this case can be in the form of paper media such as books, modules, journal articles, and so on. The knowledge, experience, and expertise of lecturers can be stored through these media, so that they can become part of the university's lenbaga. Both FIT IAIN Surakarta and FITK UIN Sunan Kalijaga believe that they must not let that knowledge disappear from their organizations. So they make policies that facilitate this knowledge retention activity. For example, both faculties already have journals as a medium for storing knowledge not only from internal lecturers themselves but also from outside. FITK UIN Sunan Kalijaga in this is certainly more advanced than FIT IAIN Surakarta because it has 9 journals, most of which have been accredited, while FIT IAIN Surakarta only has 1 journal and has not been accredited. Another thing that is done is to provide financial assistance for the preparation of books, especially teaching material books, and also patents for the work of lecturers. This shows that both faculties have realized the importance of knowledge retention in their organizations. Every activity in the two faculties is encouraged to produce products that eventually become the products of the organization.

3.3. Implementation of Knowledge Production at FIT IAIN Surakarta and FITK UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta

Another activity in knowledge management is knowledge production. This activity is an important part of the implementation of knowledge management in addition to knowledge sharing and knowledge retention. Knowledge production activities cannot be separated from knowledge sharing and knowledge retention activities. New knowledge will not emerge or be created without knowledge sharing and knowledge retention. A new knowledge is created through several processes or stages that all occur in the process of knowledge sharing and knowledge retention.

The knowledge production process starts from the process of interaction, communication, the process of sharing from one lecturer to another, or known as knowledge sharing. This knowledge sharing process can be done in various ways such as discussions, seminars, workshops, communities of practice (CoP), LPP (legitimate peripheral participation), and so on. This process is known as the socialization stage (see SECI Model by Tanaka, 2013). At this stage, there is a process of transferring knowledge from one person to another person or several people. At FIT IAIN Surakarta and FITK UIN Sunan Kalijaga, this socialization process occurs in various activities such as lecture meetings, lecturer discussions, seminars, workshops, and so on. This socialization activity can also occur in lecturer groups in the two faculties, be it in lecturer research and service groups or other groups, either groups made by the faculty or lecturer groups that are formed naturally.

The next process is the process of externalization, namely how to turn tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge. How the knowledge, experience, and expertise in a lecturer's head can be seen by others. In this case, the lecturer's knowledge is stored in various media, both print and non-print. The knowledge, thoughts and experiences of the lecturer are written in a journal, made in the form of modules or books and so on. This process is commonly called knowledge retention. Related to this concept, both faculties have carried out externalization stages in the form of knowledge retention activities. The knowledge, thoughts, and experiences of lecturers are stored in these media.

The next stage is a combination. This combination stage is how to turn explicit knowledge into tacit knowledge. How can the work of lecturers who have written and stored in various media be seen, read, and understood by other lecturers? This process can also be done through assimilation activities, lecturer discussions, or other methods. From this activity then other lecturers can be inspired to do research, writing or other activities from what they read, they know, or they understand from their

colleagues. In this context, FIT IAIN Surakarta and FITK UIN Sunan Kalijaga have carried out the process although it has not been maximized.

The last stage is the internalization process, which is how the knowledge, thoughts, and experiences of other lecturers can be stored and seeped into the minds of other lecturers, so that in the end they can create *new* knowledge from the knowledge, thoughts, and experiences of other lecturers that they already know through the process of knowledge sharing, and they have understood from the process of reading, observing and so on. This process is not yet clearly visible in the two faculties, namely how the faculty facilitates activities that encourage *knowledge production*, how lecturers are then able to pour their knowledge, thoughts, and expertise into scientific works. These four processes or stages are known as the SECI model introduced by Tanaka.

Although it seems that this SECI model has occurred in these two faculties, but actually the process in this SECI model does not occur systematically and structurally. There is no intervention from the dean or study program in an effort to carry out the knowledge production process. In other words, the activity occurs naturally, not on purpose.

Strategies, policies and practices of business knowledge management can be applied to various industries, such as the product and education business. This is because educational institutions produce knowledge, and this knowledge is an intellectual and human capital asset that can improve the quality and competitiveness of organizations in the current competitive era. In supporting the knowledge -based economy, universities play an important role. Components of knowledge management, such as creation, transfer, and maintaining knowledge, focusing on improving the quality and ability of innovation -based human resources to get competitive advantage (Sopandi & Sa'ud, 2016). In line with the Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 12 of 2012 concerning Higher Education that to increase the competitiveness of the nation in facing globalization in all fields, higher education is needed that is able to develop science and technology and produce intellectuals, scientists, and/or professionals who creative, tolerant, democratic, tough character, and dare to defend the truth for the interests of the nation.

With regard to the management of intellectual assets through knowledge management as in the Minister of Administrative Reform and Bureaucratic Reform Regulation No. 14 of 2011 concerning Guidelines for the Implementation of Knowledge Management Program. By implementing knowledge management, the organization's goal is to be better in managing its intellectual assets, namely knowledge and experience. To accelerate the achievement of the goals of bureaucratic reform, the aim is to utilize these assets to achieve better organizational performance. To improve performance, quality, and competitiveness, bureaucratic reform must be applied not only in government but also in state higher education institutions.

The process of implementing knowledge management from the Human Resources Section in Higher Education must be adjusted to the focus of increasing the tridharma of higher education. To increase competitiveness, universities have a great opportunity to implement knowledge management by utilizing human resource elements as human capital (human capital) in accordance with the vision and mission of higher education (Sopandi & Sa'ud, 2016).

The findings of this research reinforce previous research. According to Wahyudi (2021) That knowledge management encourages the birth of a technology -based online education system, so that the performance of lecturers in the field of education does not decline. Likewise in the field of research and service, knowledge management initiated the birth of a system -oriented adaptive work model. That is, learning activities, research and service related to Tri Dharma Higher Education continue to run as usual. Of course, this situation confirms, that knowledge management has great benefits for the existence of lecturer and institutional performance.

Furthermore, according to Rasyid (2021), the application of knowledge management strategies has proven to significantly affect educational institutions' performance. Knowledge management strategies have also been proven to have a strong influence in improving human relations among students. The relationship between humans can be a mediation variable for the relationship between knowledge

management strategies and the performance of educational institutions and has the same influence as the direct influence of knowledge management strategies on the performance of educational institutions.

McInerney (2011) explains that knowledge management is an effort to increase knowledge that is useful in organizations by encouraging communication, offering opportunities for learning, and encouraging the sharing of appropriate knowledge objects. This definition emphasizes the interactive aspect of knowledge management, namely knowledge sharing by people in the organization rather than the common understanding in interpreting knowledge management as a system for organizing what is commonly called 'knowledge objects'.

Knowledge sharing is a major factor in transforming individual knowledge (learning) into organizational capabilities (Lam & Lambermont-Ford, 2010; Oberholzer-Gee et al., 1997). Yang (2004) defines knowledge sharing as the circulation or turnover of knowledge in an organization, which sometimes can be simply interpreted as knowledge transfer. Knowledge sharing is integrated into the knowledge management process. In this context, knowledge sharing is one of the main activities in knowledge management. However, conducting and facilitating knowledge sharing in an organization is not something easy to do. Obstacles may arise and hinder the knowledge-sharing process. Factors that can hinder the occurrence of knowledge sharing in an organization include lack of trust, cultural diversity, and lack of time (Martin et al., 2005).

4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the knowledge-sharing process between lecturers at both faculties centers on interaction, communication, and the exchange of information, knowledge, and experiences, conducted both in-person and virtually. At FIT IAIN Surakarta, these activities appear more structured due to policies at the faculty and study program levels, necessitating collaboration between senior and junior lecturers in research and community service. Conversely, at FITK UIN Sunan Kalijaga, knowledge sharing occurs more organically without faculty or program interventions. Despite the high appreciation and preservation of lecturers' work in journals, reference books, textbooks, and intellectual property forms, the volume of such outputs remains limited, partly due to budget constraints for publication facilitation. Retaining progressive and innovative lecturers is also crucial for sustaining knowledge retention, as their departure would lead to a loss of valuable intellectual capital. The knowledge production process is inherently linked to knowledge sharing and retention, yet it currently transpires more naturally with minimal faculty and program intervention at both FIT IAIN Surakarta and FITK UIN Sunan Kalijaga. Therefore, faculties and study programs should play a more active role in implementing effective knowledge management. Future research should explore the integration of knowledge management with technological innovation to enhance these processes further.

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