Knowledge Sharing Motivation Based on Islamic View

Motivasi untuk Perkongsian Pengetahuan Berdasarkan Pandangan Islam

Norazila Mat1, Jamsari Alias2, & NurAtiqah Abdullah3

ABSTRACT
Knowledge has been highlighted as the most important and competitive resource for organizational success. Organizations might not survive in Knowledge Era without proper strategy to managing and leveraging value of their intellectual assets. However, there are several challenges in knowledge management attempt especially regarding knowledge sharing. Most people are reluctant to share their knowledge due to several reason like loss of power, insecure about the value of their knowledge, trust issues, afraid of negative consequences and benefit issue. Most of this issues are related to personal or human issues. Many have been said based on conventional practice about this issues but less have been explore from Islamic perspective. The purpose of this conceptual paper is to explore based on Islamic perspective regarding knowledge, knowledge sharing and motivation factors to encourage knowledge sharing base on Islamic point of view so that other ways to encourage knowledge sharing practice can be uncovered.

Keywords: Knowledge, Knowledge Sharing, Motivation factors and Islamic perspective

ABSTRAK

Kata kunci: Pengetahuan, Perkongsian Pengetahuan, Faktor motivasi dan perspektif Islam

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Introduction

Over the past three decades, knowledge have been acknowledge as one of the most important resources necessary for organization success (Barley et. al., 2018). Knowledge as a mix of experience, values, contextual information and expert insight (Davenport and Prusak, 1998), has been highlighted by many academicians and practitioners as the most important and competitive resource for organizational survival (eg: Sedighi et al., 2017; Spyropoulou et al., 2018). Organizations might not survive in Knowledge Era without proper strategy to managing and leveraging value of their intellectual assets (Kasemsap, 2018; Abell and Oxbrow, 2001). As a result, more organizations, both large and small, turn to knowledge management strategies to manage and leverage their organizational knowledge in full (Kinto, 2018; Davenport et al, 1998).

However, there are several challenges in knowledge management attempt especially regarding knowledge sharing. Most people are reluctant to share their knowledge due to several reason like loss of power, insecure about the value of their knowledge, trust issues, afraid of negative consequences and benefit issue (Park & Gabbard, 2018; Akgün, et. al., 2017; Carol, 2002). Most of this issues are related to personal or human issues. Many have been said based on conventional practice about this issues but less have been explore from Islamic perspective. As mention by Michael (2017), Muslims are the fastest-growing religious in the world and there were 1.8 billion Muslim based on data release by Pew Research Center in 2015 and the second largest population in the world. So their perspective on certain issues are relevant to discover to tackle the issues face by them and the whole community in general. The purpose of this paper is to explore based on Islamic perspective regarding knowledge, knowledge sharing and motivation factors to encourage knowledge sharing base on Islamic point of view so that other ways to encourage knowledge sharing practice can be uncovered.

Knowledge and Knowledge Sharing

Knowledge has become not only the philosophical question of what to search and seek, but also lately it has come to be known as a branch of management enquiry. The discussions on knowledge have been around within various perspectives and across different fields. Making reference to Plato, Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) defined knowledge as ‘justified true belief’ from its philosophical and religious aspects (Rosenthal, 1970). The importance of knowledge for firms and for society in general has been a salient long standing issue in a number of disciplines including Economics (Demsetz, 1988), Sociology (Glaser et al, 1983), Psychology (Broner et al, 2001), Philosophy (Polanyi, 1962; 1998), and Management (Nelson and Winter, 1982; Teece et al, 1990, Winter, 1987). More recently the perspective has advanced to the stage where knowledge has become a key ingredient in gaining a competitive advantage and a firm’s main inimitable resource (e.g., Gnyawali et al, 1997; Kogut and Zander, 1992; Grant, 1996).

Knowledge also involves the acquaintance with facts, truths, or principles, gained from study or investigation and general erudition; and acquaintance or familiarity gained by sight, experience, or report; and also could involve awareness, as of a fact or circumstance. Szulanski (2006) defines knowledge rather broadly as an entity which involves many phenomena, including routines, practices, and technologies. Hedlund (1994) further classified
knowledge into three aspects, involving cognitive, skills, and knowledge embodied in products. Since Polanyi’s seminal work, it has been accepted that knowledge has a non-reducible tacit component and that this is hard to transfer, as it becomes more and more tacit (Polanyi, 1967). Explicit knowledge is assumed to be efficiently transferred using documents, electronic media and through artefacts, whereas tacit knowledge requires more personal interaction and training techniques such as mentoring or storytelling (Swap et al, 2001).

In fact, the definition of knowledge itself has prompted a lively epistemological debate (Shin, Holden and Schmidt, 2001). In conceptualising knowledge, one notion that has received agreement among researchers is that “data, information and knowledge are not interchangeable concepts” (Davenport and Prusak, 1998:1). Data, which could be defined as a set of objective facts are structured records consisting of signs and raw materials that need to be processed (Willke, 1998; Chini, 2004). Information on the other hand, is regarded as data with significance (Kriwet, 1997; Davenport and Prusak, 1998) in that its context deems it precious because the user composes information (Chini, 2004). And finally, knowledge comes together with the diverse portions of information with an interpretation and meaning (Nevis et al, 1995; Kriwet, 1997) which the three normally view as blocks, each building on the other, information deriving from data and knowledge deriving from information (Davenport and Prusak, 1998; Nissen et al, 2000; von Krough et al, 2000).

Knowledge in another perspective can also be classified as information (explicit knowledge) and/or know-how (tacit knowledge) (Nonaka, 1991; Simmonnin, 1997). Information is explicit knowledge that can be transmitted without loss of integrity once the syntactical rules required for deciphering it are applied. Thus, knowledge as information implies that the user knows what it means, and that it can be recorded in written form (Grant, 1996b; Nonaka, 1994). Know-how is more complex than information, being the accumulated practical skill or experience that allows one to do something efficiently. Know-how has a personal quality that makes it difficult to formalise and to communicate because it involves both cognitive and technical elements and is not easy to write down (Grant, 1996b; Nonaka, 1994). As noted by Chini (2004), information is static in conceptual terms, whereas knowledge is constantly changing, and while information is descriptive and explicit, knowledge can be explicit or tacit. Moreover, knowledge may also be defined as information whose validity has been established through a test of proof and can, therefore, be distinguished from opinion, speculation, beliefs, or other types of unproven information and the transition from data via information to knowledge as knowledge could be described in a hierarchy along which information and data generation can be assessed, transformed and developed to its higher level (Davenport et al, 1998, Liebeskind, 1996, Shin et al, 2001).

Sabherwal and Sabherwal (2005) view knowledge sharing as involving the transfer or dissemination of knowledge among individuals or groups as a basis for knowledge utilization to create competitive advantage for the firm. Lee (2001:324) has defined knowledge sharing as “activities of transferring or disseminating knowledge from one person, group, or organization to another”, and Van den Hooff and de Ridder (2004) have further elaborated on this view, adding that knowledge sharing is a process where individuals mutually exchange their knowledge and jointly create new knowledge.

Many believe that one way to make knowledge become more powerful for organizations is through knowledge sharing practices, so that individual knowledge can be
transferred into organizational knowledge through the interaction and communication of individual co-workers, in project teams or between projects, and these knowledge sharing processes could assist in knowledge creation at higher levels (Nonaka, 1994). In other words, through knowledge sharing, an organization can transform the knowledge of individuals into organizational knowledge.

Knowledge in Islam

"العلم" as an Arabic word means to know, to understand, to perceive, to be familiar and acquainted with intensive knowledge, which is the awareness of a thing with reference to its reality (alQudri, 2007). The word “‘Ilm” (علم) occurred in 140 places in Quran, while “al-‘Ilm” (العلم) in another 27 places that connotes its importance in Islam. Al-Ma’rifah is another term used in the Quran to denote about knowledge. Al-Ma’rifah means to know, to explain, to confess, to comprehend a certain thing with the use of thinking, while The antonym of al-‘Ilm (العلم) - Ignorance (الجهل) (alQudri, 2007).

According to the opinions of Muslim philosophers, knowledge means “the picture produced about something in the mind/intellect” and “Knowledge is what one knows about something/what makes one knowledgeable about something.” (alQudri, 2007). Imam al-Ghazali said that “Knowledge is the acquisition of that information through which one can successfully attain the true goal of life”. He looked the knowledge as the picture about something in the heart. Furthermore, Naqib al-Attas mentioned that “Knowledge has been understood to mean the holy Quran, laws of the syariah, faith, spiritual knowledge, wisdom, ma’rifah and others.”, while al-Jurjani said that “al-Ma’rifah (المعرفة) and al-‘Ilm (العلم) mean to comprehend something as it appears with the use of senses from ignorance.” (Wan Daud, 2010)

Knowledge thus, in Islamic perspective, is a system of learning to be developed and disseminated in a manner that recognizes Allah as the Lord and Creator of the universe and man as His servant as well as vicegerent (khalifah of Allah) which includes the realization of something based on its true nature through different level of understanding such as application, comprehension, synthesis and judgement that includes product of learning about all kinds of things which requires mental apprehension or cognition (Wan Daud, 2010).

Knowledge Sharing Motivation from the Islamic Perception

Motivation are very important for all people to encourage them to do something. Employees who are motivated are more loyal, innovative and productive (Muñoz & Galende, 2017), and they yield high-quality results for work that they involve in (Selvarajan, et.al, 2018). Many Muslims find their motivation in religion, as well as in their cultural heritage (Ahmad and Fontaine, 2011). There are many factors which contribute to the motivation of a Muslim or an individual in general from the Islamic perspective. Basically in Muslim scholars writing and research on motivation of a believer, the main factors are related to: Spirituality, Reinforcement and Justice (Table I).
Table 1: Motivation for Knowledge Sharing from Islamic Perspective

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivation factors</th>
<th>Authors</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spirituality</strong></td>
<td>Jabnoun (2005); Ather (2011); Ahmad &amp; Fontaine (2011); Amin (2011); Kamilet al. (2011), Kedah &amp; Adamu (2011); Ramli &amp; Osman-Gani (2011); Omar (2016)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Ibadah, Iman, Taqwa, Ehsan)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Reinforcement</strong></td>
<td>Jabnoun (2005); Ather et al. (2009); Ahmad &amp; Fontaine (2011); Amin (2011); Kamilet al. (2011), Kedah &amp; Adamu (2011) and Ramli &amp; Osman-Gani (2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Khaufwaraja’-fear and hope) or (Punishment and reward)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Justice</strong></td>
<td>(Al-Adalah) Ahmad and Fontaine (2011), Amin (2011) and Kamilet al. (2011)</td>
</tr>
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</table>

i) **Spirituality Motivation for Seeking and Sharing Knowledge**

In Islam, spiritual dimensions related to strong belief system reflect from the essential principles of **Iman** (faith), **Taqwa** (Islamic piety) and **Ihsan** (love of God). Spiritual motivation are the most important motivation that stimulate Muslims to worship Allah and perform good deeds because it embedded the believed that everything we do in the name of Allah and according to Islamic law are consider as **Ibadah** (worship) and will be rewarded by Allah. It is this belief and basic intention that leads Muslims to seek Allah’s pleasure by demonstrating a high degree of devotion in every task they undertake (Ahmad, 1998).

The word **Iman** (faith) means true belief in Allah (SWT) as a creator; His angels; His books; His messengers; the Day of Judgment and life after death; and belief in pre-destination or fate (Alawneh, 1998; Amin, 2011). **Iman** is the most crucial and powerful motivating force for a Muslims, as all their activities and actions are a reflection of their **Iman** (Amin, 2011). Iman lead to taqwa meaning they will be very careful in their actions. Taqwa refers to the fear of Allah (SWT) demonstrated by a Muslim’s observance to His orders and commands (Alawneh, 1998; Amin, 2011). **Ihsan** is the love of God (Ahmad and Fontaine, 2011), and the feeling of God’s presence (Ramli and Osman-Gani, 2011). It is this love of God that further motivates and inspires a Muslim to work towards achieving God’s Pleasure (Ahmad and Fontaine, 2011; Ramli and Osman-Gani, 2011). The Prophet (PBUH) describes **Ihsan** as follows: “To worship God as if you see Him, and if you cannot achieve this state of devotion, then you must consider that He is looking at you” (Sahih Bukhari, Al Hadith, 47). All of this spirituals motivation based on Iman, Taqwa and Ihsan are an important element that encourage Muslims to seeking and sharing their knowledge as a proof that they are a true believer of Allah and willing to follow all Allah instruction to them about those matter in order the achieve Allah please with what they do. This can be view based on the following hadith and verses from the Quran related to knowledge seeking and sharing.

In Islam, the concept of sharing knowledge is an important factor in earning the blessings of Allah (s.w.t.) and gives guidance in our daily practices of passing on what we have learnt to others. Concerning the matter of paying attention to the Qur’aan and learning and teaching it, the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “The best of
you is the one who learns the Qur’aan and teaches it.” (Agreed upon. Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 4639)

Seeking knowledge is compulsory to all mankind either man or woman in Islam while sharing knowledge acquire is comprehensively obligatory to all Muslim believer. These responsibility are clearly stated in Al-Quran and Hadith. Allah SWT created man and provided him with the tools for acquiring knowledge, namely hearing, sight and wisdom. Allah says in Surah 16: “And Allâh has brought you out from the wombs of your mothers while you know nothing. And He gave you hearing, sight, and hearts that you might give thanks (to Allâh)” [al-Nahl 16:78]

Islam indeed is the religion of knowledge. The first aayah of the Qur’aan to be revealed enjoined reading which the key to knowledge is. Allah say: “Read! In the Name of your Lord Who has created (all that exists). He has created man from a clot (a piece of thick coagulated blood). Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous. Who has taught (the writing) by the pen. He has taught man that which he knew not” [al-‘Alaq 96:1-5]

In Islam, one important rule is that, knowledge comes before action. In this regard, Imam Bukhari has mentioned in the book of knowledge, a chapter that is titled “Subject: Seeking Knowledge before Saying and Action”, that put forward knowledge is a condition for saying anything or initiating any action so that the sayings and actions become valid and accepted by Allah SWT (Shahih Bukhari, 1997). In surat Fatir, Allah says, “It is only those who have knowledge among His slaves that fear Allah.” So, knowledge is the one that leads to fear of Allah, which in turn entices action” [Fathir 35:28]

Muslims regard all their action as Ibadah (worship). This creates real inner motivation and self-direction (Ahmad and Fontaine, 2011; Amin, 2011; Jabnoun, 2005; Kamilet al., 2011). The foremost components of this motive are belief in Allah (the Eternal, the Absolute and the Creator of the Universe) and the fact that man must be held accountable for his deeds in this life as well as the hereafter (Alawneh, 1998; Amin, 2011).

ii) Reinforcement Motivation for Knowledge Sharing

Motivation exists in different forms in Islām, both positive and negative reinforcement like reward and punishment; fear and hope; love and hate; heaven and hell, guide and motivate people to do righteous deeds and encourage people to avoid evil. Positive motivation stimulus for the body and soul of the believers in order to take actions and act as a drive to come closed to Allah by choosing a righteous path whereas negative motivation deter Muslims from performing certain actions. To avoid a punishment, they will avoid the bad deeds while to get a reward they will maintained the good deeds and the feeling of afraid and hope for reward is for Allah only. The positive and negative reinforcement like reward and punishment also not only in this world but until afterlife.

In the Hadīth mentioned below, the followers are encouraged to seek knowledge and get rewarded for their efforts. If anyone pursues a path in search of knowledge, Allâh will thereby make easy for him the path to Paradise and the angels spread their wings from good pleasure with one who seeks knowledge and all the inhabitants of the heaven and the earth, even fish in the depth of water, will ask forgiveness from Him
So, knowledge is the one that leads to fear of Allah, which in turn produce action. Knowledge comes before action, because with knowledge we can recognize the truth from falsehood, and tell right from wrong in the matters of the sayings, and tell the sunnah from bid’ah in the matters of worship (ibadat), and tell the valid from the invalid in the matters of dealings, and tell the Halal from Haram in the matters of behavior (ethics), and the virtue from foulness in the matters of morals, and the accepted from the unaccepted in the matters of sayings and actions. So in Islam, the truth knowledge become a primary source for human ethical actions

Allah SWT even warns every Muslim against speaking without knowledge, as He says (interpretation of the meaning): “And follow not (O man, i.e., say not, or do not, or witness not) that of which you have no knowledge. Verily, the hearing, and the sight, and the heart of each of those ones will be questioned (by Allâh)”[al-Israa’ 17:36]

Knowledge and fear of Allah may be attained by knowing His signs and creation. The knowledgeable are those who know that, hence Allaah praises them by saying (interpretation of the meaning): “It is only those who have knowledge among His slaves that fear Allâh”[Faatir 35:28]

Sharing Knowledge brings a great reward. The one who points the way to something good is like the one who does it. When the knowledgeable person dies, his reward with Allaah does not cease when he dies, rather it continues to increase so long as people benefit from his knowledge. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “When a man dies, all his deeds come to an end except for three – an ongoing charity, beneficial knowledge or a righteous son who will pray for him.” (Narrated by Muslim, 1631)

If the scholar spreads his knowledge among the people, he will have a reward like that of those who follow him. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Whoever calls people to right guidance will have a reward like that of those who follow him, without it detracting from their reward in the slightest, and whoever calls people to misguidance will have a burden of sin like that of those who follow him, without it detracting from their burden in the slightest.” (Narrated by Muslim, 2674)

iii) Justice Motivation for Knowledge Sharing

According to Islam, justice is one of the main sources for improving human motivation. In the Islamic worldview, justice denotes placing things in their rightful place. It also means giving others equal treatment. In Islam, justice is also a moral virtue and an attribute of human personality, as it is in the Western tradition. Justice is close to equality in the sense that it creates a state of equilibrium in the distribution of rights and duties, but they are not identical.

Islam calls us all to seek knowledge. Not only for men but also for women. The Messenger made seeking knowledge an obligation upon every Muslim, and he explained that the superiority of the one who has knowledge over the one who merely worships is like the superiority of the moon over every other heavenly body. He said that the scholars are the heirs of the Prophets and that the Prophets did not leave behind dinars and dirhams (i.e., money), rather their inheritance was knowledge, so whoever acquires it has gained a great share. And he (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said that seeking knowledge is a
way to Paradise. He (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Whoever follows a path in the pursuit of knowledge, Allaah will make a path to Paradise easy for him.” (Narrated by al-Bukhaari, Kitaab al-‘Ilm, 10)

Without justice, an individual will not be able to predict how he is going to be judged. Notably, employees want to be rewarded and recognized for their hard work. If not, people will fail to retain the same level of output or performance. That why in Islam the scholars occupy a noble status in Islam, and which is higher than the position of others in this world and in the Hereafter. Thins to encourage use to seek, learnt and share our knowledge. Not like us sometimes we normally assign people with higher value are those who are wealthier than others. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): “Allâh will exalt in degree those of you who believe, and those who have been granted knowledge” [al-Mujaadilah 58:11]. Because of the importance of knowledge, Allaah commanded His Messenger to seek more of it. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): “and say: ‘My Lord! Increase me in knowledge’”[Ta-Ha 20:114]. Allaah praises the scholars, as He says (interpretation of the meaning): “Say: ‘Are those who know equal to those who know not? ’ It is only men of understanding who will remember (i.e. get a lesson from Allâh’s Signs and Verses)”[al-Zumar 39:9]. Those who have knowledge are the quickest of people to understand the truth and believe in it(interpretation of the meaning): : “And that those who have been given knowledge may know that it (this Qur’aan) is the truth from your Lord, so that they may believe therein, and their hearts may submit to it with humility”[al-Hajj 22:54]

Islam calls us to learn all kinds of beneficial knowledge. Branches of knowledge vary in status, the highest of which is knowledge of sharee’ah, then knowledge of medicine, then the other fields of knowledge. The best of all branches of knowledge are the sciences of sharee’ah through which man comes to know his Lord, and his [His?] Prophet and religion. This is the knowledge with which Allaah honoured His Messenger; He taught it to him so that he might teach it to mankind: “Indeed, Allâh conferred a great favour on the believers when He sent among them a Messenger (Muhammad) from among themselves, reciting unto them His Verses (the Qur’ân), and purifying them (from sins by their following him), and instructing them (in) the Book (the Qur’ân) and Al-Hikmah [the wisdom and the Sunnah of the Prophet (i.e. his legal ways, statements and acts of worship)], while before that they had been in manifest error”[Aal ‘Imraan 3:164]

There is no goodness in knowledge which is not confirmed by action, or words which are not confirmed by deeds: “O you who believe! Why do you say that which you do not do?Most hateful it is with Allâh that you say that which you do not do”[al-Saff :2-3]. Proper understanding of Islam is one of the best of good characteristics with which a Muslim may be honoured, as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “When Allaah wishes good for a person, He makes him understand the religion.” (Agreed upon).

Reading Qur’aan, learning it and teaching it, are among the best deeds, as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “There should be no envy (hasad) except between two people, a man to whom Allaah has given (knowledge of?) theQur’aan, so he recites it night and day, and a man to whom Allaah has given wealth, so he spends it (in good deeds) night and day.” (narrated by Muslim, 815)

The Holy Qur’an, in Surah Adh-Dhariyat, verse 55 mentions: “And remind, for indeed, the reminder benefits the believers” (51:55). This verse from the Qur’an explained
that individuals who share knowledge can bring benefit to others. The verses itself reminds us that sharing knowledge is part of our responsibility as Muslims. In addition, according to a hadith by the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.): “Whoever is asked about knowledge and hides it, a bridle made of fire will be tied around his mouth on the Day of Resurrection” (narrated by Abu Hurairah, Hadith no. 8988).

Finally, let us ponder on this sayings of The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) who said: "The seeking of knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim." – (Al-Tirmidhi, Hadith 74) and in another sayings, The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: “One who treads a path in search of knowledge has his path to Paradise made easy by God...” – (Riyadh us-Saleheen,245).

Conclusions

Modern theories of motivation fail to cater to an important aspect of human life, the soul, and the needs of the soul. All modern theories are focused solely on the worldly needs and their satisfaction; even the need categorization is more or less focused on worldly, physiological and psychological needs. There is no mention of religious/ soul needs and motives. Hence, this is a fundamental and crucial difference between the concept of motivation in Islam and in that of modern motivation theories. Motivation from an Islamic perspective is gaining greater attention as more and more authors highlight the role played by religion in shaping human behavior. Islam is a way of life. All the laws and values that govern Muslim society are based on the Qur’an and Sunna. When we mention about Motivation for Knowledge Sharing from Islamic Perspective here, two main sources of references is applied; the Holy Quran (verses from Allah SWT) and the traditions (sunnah) of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. In Islam, the duty of every Muslim is to obey the value system of the Qur’an and Sunna. Furthermore, Islam, as an comprehensive religion, provide the basic rules of ethics and motivation that are required in every aspect of life, taking into consideration the considerable relation between ethics and values dominating in the community (Alhyasat, 2012).

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