

Learning Organisation of Javanese Culture: A case study of Kasunanan Palace Museum in Surakarta

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ABSTRACT

Kasunanan Palace Museum is part a cultural heritage located in the city of Surakarta, Indonesia. The Museum has collection of objects related to the Kasunanan Palace and the museum building is still connected to the palace. Therefore, the family of Kasunanan Palace and their courtiers maintain and manage the museum. Family involvement in managing the museum results in a different strategy of human resources management. This study aims to assess the management of human resources at the Kasunanan Palace Museum as a for-profit cultural organisation based on Senge's the Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organisation (Senge, 1990) focusing on group problem solving using the systems thinking method in order to convert companies into learning organisations. This study adopts qualitative methods through observation, in-depth interviews, and study documents to examine the overall characteristics of a learning organisation as applied by the courtiers and leaders of Museum Kasunanan Palace. This research found that the fifth learning organisation cannot be carried out optimally in Javanese culture-based organisations. The Javanese culture is too influential in organisational culture and employee behaviour in Indonesia to allow for a modern intervention.

Keywords: Fifth Discipline of learning organisation, Javanese culture, Kasunanan Palace Museum

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INTRODUCTION

The concept of learning organisation concept if well applied in the organisation can create human resources that support the achievement of the vision, mission and goals of the organisation and gain sustainable success.

The history of Kasunanan Palace Museum began in 1966-1967 and was built as an Art Gallery, which is now known as a museum. Kasunanan Palace Museum can be enjoyed by society as it has educational value. It is located in downtown Surakarta (Solo), Baluwarti, Pasar Kliwon, Surakarta. Construction of the court was between 1743 and 1745. The architect of the palace was Mangkubumi, the family of Susuhunan Pakubuwana II (The King of Kasunanan Palace). It was gifted to the King by Pakubawana III in Brinjarja (now Yogyakarta) and who successfully established the Sultanate of Yogyakarta bearing the title Sultan Hamengku Buwana I. Hence, it is not surprising that both palace buildings have many similarities.

The Kasunanan Palace Museum is open to visitors to view historical objects and fragments of the temple found in central Java. The collection on display are: (1) Cooking Equipment of *Abdi Dalem*; (2) The weapons that is used by Ancient Royal Family; (3) Art Supplies; and (4) historical collections such as *Kencana Train*; and (5) Hats off to the King.

This paper looks at how organisations can undertake continuous learning process in response to changing times.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Senge in his *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organisation* (Senge, 1990), the five disciplines of learning represent approaches (theories and methods) for developing three core learning capabilities: fostering aspiration, developing reflective conversation, and understanding complexity. The five disciplines are: (1) Personal Mastery; (2) Mental Models; (3) Shared Vision; (4) Team Learning; and (5) Systems Thinking (Senge, 1990). The fifth discipline is ideal for all management, but its implementation is not always easy for every organisation. There are various constraints that exist in every organisation, including Kasunanan Palace Museum, which is a for-profit cultural organisation. Javanese culture here prevails and must be applied in organisation management. This is an original study which used Senge's concept of learning organisation and applied it the Javanese context.

Table 1
Literature survey of learning organisation

Learning Organisation	References
Leadership and organisational culture positively and significantly affect the operation of learning organisation. The operation of learning organisations has a significantly positive effect on employees' job satisfaction	Chang & Lee (2007)
Although there are abundant of research on Senge's learning organisation, there has dearth of studies on organisational learning in cultural perspectives. The paper combines insights from Senge's learning organisation and Chinese cultural values to derive a series of propositions.	Lee (2004)
Learning organisation culture have direct effects on organisational performance and organisational innovativeness, potentially leading to long-term organisational success	Hussein, Mohamad, Noordin and Ishak (2014)
This paper shows the Learning Organisation (LO) as a generic promising ways to develop a school into an international level.	Suyanto (2008)
Organisational structure, organisational policies (tenure, training), leadership and management, organisational culture and organisational politics in NGOX affect the processes of OL more negatively than positively due to complex linkages between them	Andjelkovic and Boolaky (2015)
By having the right learning climate and methods available in the organisation, the individual can engage in self-directed learning; the effects which are beneficial to organisational learning and the design engineer's self-development	James-Gordon and Bal (2003)
The paper redefines the concept of organisational learning incorporating the aspect of radical innovation and creativity.	Wang and Ahmed (2003)

METHODS

This is a qualitative research and data was obtained from previous studies, interview, observation, and others. The method used is historical and which has three important stages of heuristic, criticism, and interpretation. In addition to using historical methods, this study also uses the theory of human resource management about organisational learning in the stages of interpretation (Gilbert & Delanglez, 1957). Therefore, this research is multidimensional

which uses various aspects and perspectives of concepts and theories.

Primary data and secondary data were used. Primary data was obtained from interviews with perpetrators at the Kasunanan Palace Museum, while secondary data was obtained from previous research and library data.

Data was analysed by comparing data from interview with fifth discipline of organisation learning by Senge (1990).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Based on observations and interviews, some Javanese culture has become a tradition and are implemented in the daily activity of Kasunanan Palace Museum:

1. The use of Javanese language in daily conversation.

Javanese language is the native language of Surakarta city. It has two levels, Ngokoas the lowest level and Krama the highest level. Kasunanan Palace which is the centre point of Javanese culture, uses Javanese language as its native language and in daily conversation. Kasunanan Palace Museum which is one of the Kasunanan Palace buildings still uses the Javanese language in a conversation between employees and between subordinates and superiors. Although the Kasunanan Palace Museum is a for-profit organisation, Javanese language is still preserved. Especially for guide and language conversations to visitors, the employee used the adjusted language.

2. Obeisance culture

Obeisance as culture has existed since ancient times and even before religion. Until now, still governs in Kasunanan Palace Surakarta. Obeisance culture in Kasunanan Palace is based on caste. The employees of Kasunanan Palace Museum which is *Abdi Dalem*, have to pay obeisance when they meet with the Palace family members who are superior. Obeisance culture does

not depend on at any age, but caste. Courtiers older equipment must worship when met with palace family even though he was younger. Contrary to the society, obeisance cultural is an expression of respect of the young to the old.

3. The Caste System

Kasunanan Palace Surakarta like other palaces in many countries, have a caste system. It adopts a top-down approach: (1) the so-called King Pakubowono usefulness as a leader of Kasunanan Palace; (2) “Kanjeng”, who is a child of the King; (3) “Ndoro”, who is the grandson of the King; (4) “Sentana” who was a member of the kingdom; (5) “*Abdi Dalem*”, servants who are devoted their body and soul to Kasunanan Palace; and (6) “*Abdi Dalem Pakasa*”, servants like *Abdi Dalem* who have lower level jobs. Museum Kasunanan is still within the scope of the Palace, and managed by the Kraton Surakarta, and its most senior level leader is KGPH Puger (the post if called Pengageng Museum and Tourism). Kasunanan Palace Museum is managed by the royalty. The employee of Kasunanan Palace Museum was recruited among the courtiers or *Abdi Dalem*. There are no specific criteria for people who donate to the Palace. There is also No specific criteria in recruiting courtiers in Kasunanan Palace Surakarta. Placement of field work courtiers is based on their educational background, work experience, and

their ability. But the courtiers could not choose a position in the job. All job placements are determined by the King.

Based on the previous discussion, the study concluded the following:

1. Personal Mastery: is a discipline of continually clarifying and deepening our personal vision, of focusing our energies, of developing patience, and of seeing reality objectively.

Provision 1: human resources at the Museum Kasunanan has the opportunity to develop themselves and improved ability of the management but not all were able to take advantage because of the age factor.

2. Mental models: are deeply ingrained assumptions, generalisations, which influence how we understand the world.

Provision 2: Respect also makes courtiers lack courage in developing new ideas as well engage in to improve thing. In this case, Mental Models of the fifth learning organisation cannot be done optimally in Kasunanan Palace Museum.

3. Shared visions: build a sense of commitment in a group, by developing a shared picture of the future that will be created, principles and practices that guide our way towards that future.

Provision 3: In a learning organisation, obeisance in the Kasunanan Palace Museum is a barrier to a shared vision discipline. Lower level Employees which are courtiers must obey and

follow what is conveyed by superiors who are ancestors of Kasunanan Palace Surakarta. When the courtiers do not follow their orders means that irrespective of Kasunanan Palace Surakarta family who have a higher caste.

4. Team Learning: transform speech and thinking skills (thinking skills), so that a group can legally develop the brain and have greater capabilities than when each member of the working group.

Provision 4: In the Kasunanan Palace Museum, there is no process of recruitment and selection, so the ability of courtiers is diverse. From the *Abdi Dalem* perspective, this organisation still has not been able to do so because of the large gap related to educational background, age, and ways of thinking. Team Learning can only be done by a few people who similar in age, and where they share cultural values.

5. System Thinking: perspective, the way language is used to describe and understand the strengths and relationships that determine the behavior of a system. The fifth discipline help us to see how to change systems more effectively and to take action that is more appropriate with the process of interaction between the components of a system with the natural environment.

Provision 5: Use of the Java language in the activities of these organisations also leads to limits organisation learning. With the use of the Java language in

the activities of the organisation, system thinking employee's courtiers Museum, which is limited to thoughts customs associated with Java.

Additionally, research show that cultural Profit oriented organisation could not provide a career path for employees, therefore, it has an effect on the employee's personal motivation. The fifth learning organisation cannot be implemented optimally due to the barriers related to Javanese culture at Palace Museum.

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