Corporate Universities Landscape and Practice in Indonesia

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Abstract
The challenge to continuously align their organizations in a disrupted and evolving business world is getting more difficult. Adaptability and being attractive to talent are two emerging challenges in organization strategic agenda and both have learning as an important driving force to be a winning company. Facing with talent shortages and a quickening rate of obsolescence for employee’s capabilities, organizations continue to expand their Learning and Development (L&D) program and Corporate University (CU) concept emerge as a new strategic platform and organizations are increasingly turning to this learning approach to deal with their ever-growing employee development needs, from job-related skills to general organizational values. A review of the literature shows that most research on CU was done in a western context, and how the CU model is applied in developing countries remains scan especially in Southeast Asia. The purpose of this study is to go deeper into the scientific study of the colorful of CUs, present an overview of the landscape of this phenomenon and respectively offer significant insight into the way CUs practice in Indonesia. This study adopts qualitative research approach and multiple case studies are employed in several organizations that self-declared CUs. The expected result of this study provides significant insight into the way CUs practice in Indonesia and extend the literature of CU specifically in Indonesia context.

Key Words: Corporate University, Indonesia, Learning and Development (L&D), Working Paper
1. Introduction

To survive and thrive in a VUCA (volatile, Uncertain, Complex, and Ambiguous) environment that characterized by disruptive change and vicious global competition due to technological advancement and the knowledge-based, this had a swift and substantial impact on the way corporations do business and the need for continuous improvement and competitive innovation showed today by organization (Dealtry, 2005; Song et al., 2011). (Morin & Renaud, 2004) implies that enterprises and even small businesses need to keep employees working at the top of their performance. According to (Teece et al., 1997) suggested that among different organizational capabilities, education and skills enhancement represent some of the most influential tools that organizations can exploit to grow.

Historically, organizations have mandated their training department (TD) to ensure that workers possess appropriate skill sets to do their jobs. Over the last several decades, however, the TD has evolved. The process of training is now often referred to as the process of learning. The profile of learning in the workplace has been raised by the function becoming more strategic and integrated into the organizations strategy (Blass, 2005). The establishments of in-house corporate education facilities in many organizations and in some cases refer to corporate universities (CUs) as their new strategic learning platform.

(Rademakers, 2014) suggested that Corporate University (CU) provide educational programs for organization from basic training to high level programs that playing a strategic, partnership role in the organization. The extent of literature on CUs over an extended period of time implies the concept of CUs is more than just a fashion word and becomes a new business trend that necessitates further research to understand the phenomenon. Build upon the highlight important of scientific study of CUs, the purpose of this study is to go deeper into the scientific study of the colorful of CUs, present an overview of the landscape of this phenomenon and respectively offer significant insight into the way CUs practice in Indonesia.

2. Literature Review

The concept of the CU is not a new one. According to (Ewer & Russ-Eft, 2017) the term ‘corporate university’ is interchangeably used with the terms like Academy or Institute or Centre of Excellence that primarily as an improvement over TD in organization. The origin of CUs is unclear and difficult to document since many corporations started their own-in house learning and development (L&D) long before any of them thought of calling the as “Corporate University”. We have witnessed historically evolution of the L&D program in the workplace and according to (Meister, 1998) in her influential book highlighted the shift of the paradigm where the focus of training moves beyond the individual employee to the organizational developing its capacity for learning.
Publication of the CU flourished at the turn of the millennium occurred between 1998 and 2002 (Ryan et al, 2015) with books and article journals from scholars and practitioners in various countries (e.g. Jeanne Meister, Mark Allen, Richard Dealtry). In this period the literature on CUs was largely concerned with describing and defining the phenomenon called the ‘corporate university’, outlining how to establish a CU, the different types of CUs and why there was such growth occurring in the numbers of CUs. The next wave of CUs concepts took place afterward, mainly contributed from practitioner and consultant perspectives that presented an insight into what has been happening to CUs, what changes have occurred and what the emerging trends are in CUs.

(Allen, 2010) suggested that the CU movement has become truly global in scope with CUs becoming highly noticeable all over the world. The wave is now accelerating in the rest of globe and organization in Asian countries such as Infosys in India, Huawei in China, Singapore Airlines in Singapore, and phenomenon reached Indonesia quite late on as several prominent companies such as Telkom, Pertamina, PLN, and Bank Mandiri have self-declared CUs.

Despite this noticeable growth, some scholars have challenged the legitimacy and effectiveness of CUs for delivering organization learning initiative. While others state that the CU phenomena has taken an important role in developing human capital within the context of contemporary corporate settings as there are real trends and strategic issues underlying this growth. Scholars and practitioners clearly laid an important argument about why organization should have this one ground and what rationale for setting up their own CUs.

Although the term CU suggests a clear and identified concept, there is no uniform definition and typologies of this concept. To date, practitioners and scholars have defined various definitions and taxonomies to understand the concept of CU. Definitions developed in the early and latter half of 2000 (e.g. Allen, 2002; Meister, 1998; Prince & Stewart, 2002) suggest a complete amalgamation of CUs in the organizational value chain and offer valuable perspectives on how organizations leveraged CUs for creating unique competitive advantages.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Questions

According to the problem statement above as indicated in introduction, we have basically two solid research questions as stated below:
RQ1: How are the landscape of current practice and empirical status of the CUs in Indonesia?
RQ2: What conceptual model is relevant to explain the CU in Indonesia?
3.2 Research Approach

In accordance to the research questions and purposes allotted above, the author adopts qualitative research approach and seven steps in conducting qualitative research by (Neuman, 2013) as depicted below are being carried in order to give insight and guidance for this study. This research employs exploratory studies that according to (Robson, 2002) as cited by (Saunders et al., 2007) an exploratory study is a valuable means of finding out ‘what is happening; to seek new insights; to ask questions and to assess phenomena in a new light’. This research employ case study as research strategy.

The case study method is applied and multiple case studies are utilized in this research. The rationale for using multiple cases focuses upon the need to establish whether the findings of the first case occur in other cases and, as a consequence, the need to generalize from these findings. For this reason (Yin, 2003) argues that multiple case studies may be preferable to a single case study. The evidence from multiple-case is often considered more compelling, and the overall study is therefore regarded as being more robust.

**Figure 1: Steps in the Quality Research Process**

![Diagram of research process]

*Source: Adapted from Neuman (2014, p 21)*

3.3 Data Collection

Undertaking contextual research on the topic of CUs, revealed that neither the total number of CUs, and nor the number of corporations with structured corporate education programs for employees, were known. In determining the research site, the selection of the CUs for this research is deliberates: private companies, state owned companies, government agency are approached in order to obtain a diverse perspective on CUs practice.

4. Expected Results and Discussion

The features of qualitative data indicate the diverse nature of qualitative analysis. (Saunders et al., 2007) underline that there is no standardized and uniform approach to the analysis of
qualitative data. While different approaches to qualitative analysis share several features, (Saunders et al., 2007) outline a number of analytic strategies to analyze researcher qualitative data with the general set of procedures that involves the following activities: categorization, ‘unitizing’ data, recognizing relationships and developing the categories you are using to facilitate this, and developing and testing the data to reach conclusions. The results of the analysis are expected to give broader and comprehensive information and provide sound answer for the research questions allotted above.

5. Conclusions

The growth of CUs also justifies exploration and discussion of the practice of this phenomenon. However, there has been paucity of scholarly publications examining the CU in Indonesia organizational settings. The scientific literatures on CU are numerous but not overwhelming. A review of the literature shows that how the CU model is applied in developing countries remains scant. In accordance to research question allotted above. This study is expected providing the landscape of current practice and empirical status of the CUs and providing relevant conceptual model to comprehend CU phenomenon in Indonesia.

This section also wants to indicate some limitations to the research that could be considered as improvements in the methodology for comparable future research or as opportunities for future research. By referring to CUs it is possible the response and breadth of data collection may be limited. The response is also like to elicit a broader, more encompassing range of responses, especially from corporations that do not have a formal CU entity but provide a structured approach to corporate education and training for their employees.

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