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Can Transdisciplinary Vision Meet Leadership Practices?

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Abstract.
This article is the result of a study of leadership practices at IAIN Kendari, which focused on two aspects: 1) leadership practices in determining the direction and explaining the big picture of IAIN Kendari; and 2) leadership practices in formulating IAIN Kendari's development strategy. The following findings were obtained through qualitative research using the narrative method: First, IAIN Kendari's vision states that the institute will "become a center for transdisciplinary studies in Asia by 2045." Current leadership practices, however, do not appear to be in sync with this vision, which is still hazy. Second, routinely oriented leadership practices have not yet reached the depths of IAIN Kendari's long history to produce new breakthroughs and innovations, and the role of the leader as a transformer of IAIN Kendari's vision has not yet materialized into real policies and actions.

Keywords: leadership, strategy, transdisciplinary vision, quality of education

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1. Introduction

Higher education is currently faced with increasingly complex challenges, encapsulated in the phrase quality of education, which will determine its existence in the future [1]. Therefore, various efforts are taken to gain competitive advantage, especially regarding the core business of higher education, namely: teaching education, research, and community service. One of the examples is that universities are closer to the world of work, industry, and so on [2].

However, the competitive advantage has drawn criticism as a neoliberal revival in higher education. Market principles require universities to develop effective strategies in winning the competition, which is known as the key building block for neoliberalism. In such a climate, the position of higher education leadership becomes important in conceptualizing competitive advantage which includes: suitability for the environment, opportunities, and finding a frame of reference [3]. Spin-Off University can be an example

of the practice of competitive advantage through the exploitation of knowledge and skills that are difficult for competitors to imitate. They present a new framework that enriches the scientific literature [4].

The experience above shows that making a difference in university management is not a simple matter. However, the leader has a big responsibility in making a difference through the roles of building the organization, and strengthening relationships. In this context, leaders are required to show themselves as visionaries, strategists, trainers, politicians, campaigners, and reliable assessors [5]. This capacity is needed not only for ordinary situations, more than that it is an unexpected situation, uncertainty [6], and unseen competition [7].

IAIN Kendari has a big dream of becoming a center of excellence in transdisciplinary studies in Southeast Asia by 2045 [8], in line with the national spirit towards a Golden Indonesia [9]. It seems that IAIN Kendari is very enthusiastic about welcoming Indonesia Emas with its transdisciplinary contribution. Thus, the transdisciplinary vision is not only a watchword but must be realized in various dimensions of higher education management, especially at the core of its business.

How do you get started? Crowds of overflowing passionate people, full of enthusiasm about transdisciplinarity, will end tragically without a leader present. Not a ceremonial leader, but a substantive leader, who has a philosophical to practical awareness. He must really realize that transdisciplinarity is the pinnacle of institutional management wisdom [10]. The existence of a leader is measured by ideas followed by real work. Descartes says "cogito ergo sum", I think so I exist [11], or Shari'ati "I act then I am" [12], can be transferred in the context of leadership, that real leaders are those who have ideas which are subsequently proven in practice. This is in line with the transformational approach to leadership, that the black and white of an organization is very much determined by the compassion of its leaders [13]. Based on this review, the organization's vision should be in line with leadership practice.

This article attempts to examine leadership practices at IAIN Kendari from a change perspective, based on the concept from Kotter developed by Northouse, consisting of 3 (three) dimensions, namely: determining the direction of the organization, unifying people, and motivating and inspiring [14].

2. Research Method

This research uses a qualitative approach with a narrative method [15], where the research results are presented in the form of stories about events and experiences of

leadership practices at IAIN Kendari. Data collection was carried out through interviews, participatory observation, and document study [16]. In the interview process, the key informants are lecturers, while supporting informants are employees, students and the community. Participation observation is carried out on several activities, such as: lecturer activities, employee activities, and student activities. Document review was carried out on the 2014-2019 IAIN Kendari strategic plan.

Data analysis was performed using models from Miles and Huberman, namely data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions [17]. Data validity guarantees are obtained through extended observations, increased persistence, triangulation, member checks, and transferability tests [18].

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Determines the direction of the organization

Organizations are formed for specific purposes, which are impossible to achieve if done personally. In it requires cooperation between people, even between groups of people [19]. The position of the leader in that context is a determinant and provider of direction so that the organization has a clear road map. Mastery of the internal and external conditions of the organization is imperative. Furthermore, strategies for achieving goals can be formulated.

Based on the strategic plan of IAIN Kendari, the direction of the organization is clearly seen in its vision of "becoming the center of transdisciplinary studies in Asia by 2045". This means that leaders no longer create a vision individually, but immerse themselves in the vision of the organization. In this context, the leadership of IAIN Kendari is tasked with transforming the vision into organizational management practices.

An interesting event is the enthusiasm of the leadership of IAIN Kendari in encouraging the transformation of status to become a University. It is believed that this is a strategic step to further increase the level of higher education, while at the same time expanding its field of work. However, there is no correlation between increasing institutional status and achieving a transdisciplinary vision.

The big picture of IAIN Kendari should be explained, not only to the academic community, but also to its external customers. The fact is that the process of explaining internal conditions to the academic community has not taken place properly, including the low ability to reproduce the transdisciplinary vision into the identity of IAIN Kendari.

In the context of strategy, status transfer is the only strategy that can be recognized. Various efforts of the leadership, as well as organizational resources are encouraged to achieve the status transfer agenda. The unclear correlation between the status transfer variable and the transdisciplinary vision has led to the assumption that this institution does not yet have a unified direction.

Leadership practices are not in an empty space, but have a very clear context. One of the software that describes the direction and context of organizational management is its strategic plan, a long-term planning based on internal and external analysis [20]. Internal and external analysis can use methods that sharpen the vision of the organization, for example the use of a balanced scorecard that elaborates on four perspectives on the strategy to be transformed into the implementation level, namely: finance, customers, internal processes, and growth and learning [21]. Thus, the leader is positioning himself as a strategic architect who defines the vision and mission of the organization in accordance with the changing movements of the times [22].

A shared vision is a shared picture of the future, includes purposeful principles and practices, and a commitment to achieving goals. This is a sign that the organization is in the process of becoming a learning organization, the organization is making knowledge an important asset, expanding personal capacity, continuously reflecting, building study groups, and systems thinking [23]. A shared vision is very important in the transformation process [24] and build cooperation within the organization [25].

It is very important to inspire a shared vision [26], as attracting positive emotions that lead to effective leadership, relationships between members, and involvement in the organization [27]. Communication is the key word in achieving a common vision [28].

The shared vision does not stop at the text of a strategic plan document, but is moving. The lack of members' appreciation of the organizational vision is a sign that an organizational vision has not become a shared vision. This means that there is something missing in leadership, so it is necessary to improve leadership practices [29].

3.2. Bring people together

The people in an organization are not uniform, they come from various backgrounds. The purpose of the organization unites them. The leader's job in this context is to communicate goals, strengthen commitment, and build a team.

The image formation of IAIN Kendari through mass and electronic media is quite intensively carried out, especially through the field of public relations. Various activities and achievements are always published in real-time, very fast, with various social media

networks. In addition, the image of IAIN Kendari is strengthened by the militancy of journal volunteers and the growing library repositories. This raises the IAIN Kendari webometric ranking to a quite encouraging level.

An interesting fact is that the activity of journal volunteers is not correlated with issues of leadership, but is more dominant in the attitude of voluntarism. They are involved in managing scientific journals as a hobby that hones writing skills and increases understanding of the workings of scientific journals. They don't care about structural matters, they seem to own a world of their own.

In contrast to the library repository which is driven by the institutional structure of the IAIN Kendari, which runs because of the obligation as an officer assigned to manage the library. Likewise with public relations who have the task and function of building the image of the institution in society.

The personal commitment of the lecturers is quite high, by helping to socialize IAIN Kendari on various social media platforms. Likewise with students who voluntarily strengthen the image of IAIN Kendari in society, in various ways and media. Nor do they care about structural problems. The love of the alma mater is reason enough for them.

These facts can facilitate the task of the leader in uniting people at IAIN Kendari, especially in the context of achieving the organizational vision. As far as the author's investigation is concerned, this opportunity has not been utilized properly by the leadership to build a formidable force in the context of institutional transformation.

The diversity of the backgrounds of the people in the organization is an inevitable social fact. Hence, understanding and managing diversity is the primary job of a leader [30]. Diversity management can optimize organizational performance [31], and can increase work productivity [32]. In a variety of conditions, leaders need to rethink the right strategy in managing diversity [33].

Communicating goals continuously must be done by leaders so that diversity can be united in a common goal. In this context the leader can develop goal-oriented organizational management. Besides being able to unite people, it can also be a tool to measure employee performance and satisfaction [34].

Leadership has a strong influence on organizational commitment. Proper treatment from the leadership, both verbally and non-verbally, to subordinates will create a comfortable working atmosphere, foster a sense of love for the work environment. This has an impact on high work commitment to the organization [35]. The building of organizational commitment will have an impact on improving performance and competitiveness [36], and reducing employee turnover [37].

3.3. Motivate and Inspire

The presence of a leader in every movement of the organization is very important. Not only formalistic, but felt down to the subconscious of followers. Leaders are here to inspire, encourage, empower, and fulfill unmet needs.

The big dream of IAIN Kendari to become a university and become a center for transdisciplinary studies requires a contribution of ideas from the academic community. The unavailability of room for brainstorming causes these big dreams to only belong to certain circles. On the leadership side, there is very little chance of hearing new ideas, let alone giving awards.

Big dreams require big work, which in itself requires a lot of support. Good social relations must be maintained, especially internally. The relationship that is built because of the common goal for the greatness of the institution, is not fenced off by certain subjectivity and stereotypes.

Leaders also need to help with subordinates' career planning (lecturers and employees), explain their important role in the organization, appreciate performance improvement, exercise control by being present at work, build trust with subordinates. These facts need to be addressed in order to achieve common goals, especially in line with the transdisciplinary spirit.

Involving all members in various organizational activities is a good example, but it is even better if they are inspired. Inspired employees or employees will be more productive so that they inspire others around them to strive for higher levels. This is where the real breakthrough is seen in an organization [38]. In fact, greater involvement is needed, beyond transformational leadership, by inspiring innovation amid increasingly complex organizational developments [39]. Inspirational leadership based on the initiative to prioritize common interests, restraint the ego, lead growth, be emotionally intelligent, humanize, and respectful leadership. This is an asset for a dynamic and hands-on leader [40].

The leader is not a great god who can do things with his power. It must be supported by a conducive organizational climate, through increasing professionalism in organizational management [41]. One study shows a strong correlation between organizational climate and leadership [42]. In line with spirit 4.0, leadership functions can be carried out by utilizing available technology applications, for example in the supervisory process [43], and performance measurement [44].

In organizations such as universities, organizational management professionalism needs to be one of the focuses in leadership work. This is due to the position of

higher education as a vehicle for education, not only for students but also for the wider community.

4. Conclusion

Leadership practice, in both for-profit and non-profit organizations, demands clarity of direction, the ability to bring people together, and the ability to motivate and inspire. The process of change that takes place very quickly, which also requires universities to be adaptive, necessitates showing leaders who can oversee change. IAIN Kendari, which has a big dream to jump to become a university, is also a center for transdisciplinary studies in Asia by 2045, must show a rhythm that is in line with leadership practices. Enthusiasm and good intentions, of course, are important basic assets. But it must be supported by the readiness of other variables such as organizational culture, leadership style, organizational climate, and so on. The discrepancies shown in institutional management can be a bell in the importance of improving leadership practices.

This article suggests the importance of further investigations on the intersection of institutional transformation and transdisciplinary vision at IAIN Kendari. In addition, it is also necessary to investigate organizational culture at IAIN Kendari.

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