

Research article

Reaching the Community through a Transdisciplinary Vision: Strengthening the Social Responsibility of Islamic Higher Education

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Abstract.

The proximity of higher education to internal and external customers reflects its quality. As a result, various activities in higher education institutions must be geared toward customer satisfaction. Strengthening social responsibility is another example. This article aimed to provide an overview of: 1) the social orientation of Islamic higher education's vision; 2) Islamic higher education policies that demonstrate social responsibility; and 3) Islamic universities' responses to requests for social responsibility based on this premise. The following findings were obtained through qualitative descriptive research at IAIN Kendari: first, transdisciplinarity in IAIN Kendari's vision had a strong social orientation, not only responding to short-term customer needs but also addressing broader and longer-term needs. Second, the policies resulted in a lack of academic responsibility toward students as internal customers, as well as a lack of attention to the needs of the larger community as external customers. Third, IAIN Kendari was quick to respond to internal customers' requests for social responsibility. Requests for social responsibility from external customers, on the other hand, were handled in a reactive manner.

Keywords: transdisciplinary, social responsibility, Islamic higher education

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1. Introduction

The idea of transdisciplinary departs from awareness of the problems of the new century such as: water, forced migration, poverty, environmental crises, violence, terrorism, neo imperialism, the destruction of social order, and so on. The complexity of the problems of the new century cannot be adequately addressed through specific individual disciplinary areas. Higher education institutions that should look at world problems holistically are still practicing domination of a scientific discipline. An interdisciplinary (albeit small) effort is shown in the fields of planning and philosophy. Therefore, universities should

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be encouraged to increase their sensitivity to the challenges of the new century, by starting to use a transdisciplinary approach [1].

Transdisciplinary has a long history in academic discourse, serving as a scientific response to natural and social events. Higher education institutions have yet to show serious efforts to make transdisciplinary the main stream of their activities. This is reflected in the inadequate, or even unavailable, budget support for tertiary research activities. Finally, transdisciplinarity is considered rhetoric, and more than that, it is a marginalized idea [2].

Moving on from the historical basis of transdisciplinarity and the experience of world universities, it can be concluded that the effort to make transdisciplinarity as an approach to solving social and universal problems lies on the shoulders of universities. In addition, choosing a transdisciplinary approach is a process of bringing universities closer to the community, especially solving social problems. This perspective emphasizes that universities have a high social responsibility for various humanitarian problems, not only taking care of internal matters. This optimism is reinforced by Klein, that transdisciplinarity has the hope to succeed by paying attention to the knowledge base, organizational structure, and implementation strategy [3].

IAIN Kendari, has emphasized that it carries the vision "to become a center for transdisciplinary studies in Southeast Asia by 2045". This is an indication of the high commitment to answer current problems faced by the world and society. This article tries to explore this commitment by reading the strategic plan (Renstra) of IAIN Kendari, 2019-2023 [4], policies, and responses to demands for social responsibility.

2. Method

This research was conducted at IAIN Kendari, which uses a qualitative approach with a narrative method [5]. Therefore, information is presented in the form of a story related to a series of events related to the direction of development of IAIN Kendari, namely realizing the vision of "becoming a center for transdisciplinary studies in Asia by 2045". The data collection process was carried out through in-depth interviews [6], participant observation, and document review [7]. Interviews were conducted with leaders, lecturers, students, and community leaders. Participation observation is carried out in various campus activities, for example: learning activities, official activities, and student activities. Meanwhile, the document studied was the Strategic Plan (Renstra) of IAIN Kendari, 2019-2023. The data analysis process is carried out in stages, starting from data collection, data reduction, data presentation, to drawing conclusions (as shown in

Figure 1). To ensure the validity of the data, triangulation was carried out, extended observations, increased persistence, and conducted member checks.

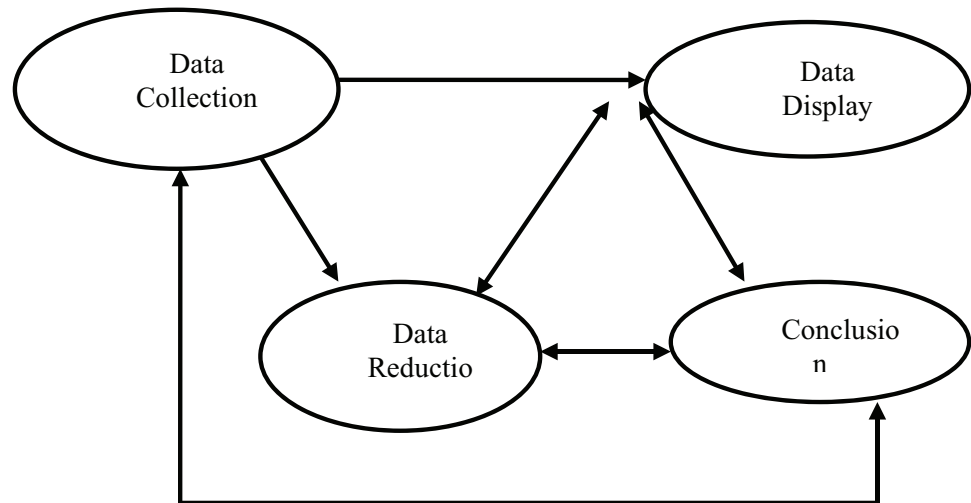


Figure 1: Research data analysis process [8].

3. Result and Discussion

3.1. Social Orientation to the Vision of IAIN Kendari

Transdisciplinary in the vision of IAIN Kendari shows a very strong social orientation, not only answering customer needs in the short term but touching broader and long-term needs. The very rapid development of the world affects various aspects of people's lives, so IAIN Kendari offers a holistic approach to various problems that are the impact of the development of the world. Internally, a transdisciplinary vision can be a characteristic and pride of the academic community. Externally, the transdisciplinary vision is believed to be able to make a real contribution to social problems.

The institutional transformation from IAIN to UIN is a strategic step to expand the service field to the community. Currently, the various study programs spread across four faculties have opened public access to more varied educational services, according to their needs. However, institutional transformation (to become UIN) will open up even greater access for the community to get better education services, with more varied study programs.

The weakness of the transdisciplinary vision that is promoted by IAIN Kendari is the unclear description of transdisciplinary output in graduates, and also a description of transdisciplinary-based community service.

3.2. Higher Education Policies on Social Responsibility

The resulting policies are still academic responsibility towards students as internal customers, for example providing scholarships for poor students with achievement (BIDIKMISI), reducing tuition fees for poor students, and other types of scholarships. Aspects that are directly related to the smoothness of learning are the fulfillment of educational infrastructure, for example: learning laboratories, IT-based learning media, and the provision of free internet access via a WIFI network.

Higher education policies are related to the wider community, for example the implementation of real work lectures (KKN) and community-based research (CBR). Previously, there was a program for assisted villages, but it was later removed from the nomenclature of financing in Islamic universities. This means that activities that are in contact with the community still rely on national programs, not yet an independent idea from IAIN Kendari. Thus, in the policy aspect, an internal policy has not been formulated which indicates social sensitivity.

3.3. Higher Education Responses to Social Responsibility Demands

IAIN Kendari is quite responsive in fulfilling requests for social responsibility to internal customers. Internal customers are not only students but also educational staff. The fulfillment of learning support facilities and administrative and operational activity facilities, including the fulfillment of non-academic activities by students, is a high indicator of social responsibility towards internal customers.

Meanwhile, requests for social responsibility from external customers are responded to in a reactive manner. As previously explained, the community service that is carried out is still very formalistic, through real work lectures (KKN) and community-based research (CBR). For CBR, this effort is accommodated by LPPM but it is the personal creativity of the researcher. The strategic research cluster has not touched external areas, so that IAIN Kendari lacks data on socio-community conditions.

Social problems encountered in society, for example: poverty, violence against children, radicalism, the hoax phenomenon in the social media era, and disasters, have not yet been addressed as strategic issues that end in policy. What appears is individual responses from lecturers through various discussion forums, or reactive initiatives. From this point of view, IAIN Kendari's social responsiveness is still low.

A shared vision is a shared picture of the future, directed principles and practices to achieve goals, and most importantly the building of commitment in the group [9]. Therefore, it is very important in inspiring a common vision [10]. Communication is the key word in achieving a common vision [11]. In a shared vision there are positive emotional pull factors as a means of effective leadership, the relationship between members, and their involvement in the organization [12].

A shared vision is a tool for developing a learning organization [13], not a dream but reality [14], whose role is to create a professional learning society [15]. Creating a learning society is the result of the interaction between shared leadership, shared vision, and supportive conditions [16]. Issues in educational technology such as engagement, empowerment, and activation will be realized if starting from a common vision [17].

Organizations that have social responsibility try to influence the surrounding community with various activities and voluntary assistance [18]. Social responsibility also means that an institution has social obligations that are visible in policies, decision making and actions that benefit society [19]. Not only social obligations, organizational social responsibility also includes social reactions, and social responsiveness. In the context of social obligations, the community is considered to be a supporter and a licenser for the establishment of an organization. So that the community has the right to benefit from the organization. From the point of view of social reaction, an organization works due to the norms, values and expectations of today's society [20].

4. Conclusion

Carrying a transdisciplinary vision in higher education signifies readiness and commitment to provide solutions to contemporary societal problems. Internal consolidation must be strengthened first, so that universities have the power to break down social problems. This means that the energy of higher education must be spent maximally to realize this transdisciplinary vision. As a manifestation of social responsibility, universities must show their seriousness in embodying a transdisciplinary vision, not only in fulfilling internal customer satisfaction but (more importantly) in the wider community. The transdisciplinary vision must be reduced to policies covering the three principles of higher education, supported by adequate budget support, and carried out seriously through programs or activities..

This article suggests the importance of using a transdisciplinary approach in the management of higher education, a strong leadership commitment, and making transdisciplinary a culture. For further investigations, a study on transdisciplinary-based university management is needed.

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