

## Conference Paper

# Study of Management Diversity Based on Biographical Characteristics in Higher Education

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## Abstract

This study aimed to describe the diversity based on biographical characteristics in the Department of Economic Education. Informants consisted of lecturers and faculty leaders. The research method used qualitative approach with participant observation to see natural phenomenon and social activity. Data collection techniques used observation, documentation, interviews and document analysis. Activities in data analysis were data reduction, display data, and conclusion drawing / verification. Data validity applied source and methodological triangulation. The results showed that the biographical diversity from the age aspect in the Department of Economic Education showed the ideal age distribution, but the age range was so far that the generation Y employees was fewer than the generation X and the baby boomers, which implicated the increase of the workload of generation Y. This phenomenon often became an undisclosed internal conflict. From the aspect of sex in the Department of Economic Education, the number of male employees was 23 and the number of female employees was 21. From years of service, it was 1 year to 20 years. The findings of this study indicated that age range which implicated employee workloads and sex differences were not part of discrimination.

**Keywords:** management, diversity, multicultural management, biographical diversity

## 1. Introduction

Employees need to understand the organization to be able to develop and socialize with other members of the organization. Understanding of both conceptual and practice organizations will facilitate and help employees to work effectively, efficiently and professionally. Robbins (2007) stated that organization is a shared system of meaning shared by members who distinguish it from other organizations. Furthermore Schein (McAuley, et al., 2017) stated that the organization is a rational coordination undertaken by a number of people in order to achieve clear goals, through the division

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of labor and function, and through the hierarchy of authority and accountability. Furthermore, Priansa (2014) stated that the office organization is a collectivity of people who exist in the office environment, where the activities are designed consciously, coordinated, and arranged by its members in order to achieve certain goals.

During the 1990s and into the 21st century, human resource diversity becomes a major component of labor phenomena within organizations. Diversity is an issue that is clearly important and relevant today and in the future. Demographic changes create new challenges for managers (Ellitan, 2014). Managing the diversity of the workforce means attracting, retaining, motivating individuals with diverse and varied backgrounds relating to race, sex, origin, language, marital status, and education [3]. Diversity is related to individual differences that make us all unique and different from others [11]. The diversity of individual characteristics or primary characteristics, such as age, ethnicity, sex, ability, race, and other characteristics (secondary characteristics) such as geography, work experience, income, religion, language, communication style, family status, work style, and education (Lestari, 2015), can be developed so as to create competitive advantage for an organization. Diversity management emphasizes the purpose of identifying and improving discriminatory practices in the workplace and helping organizations to gain competitive advantage (Taylor et al, 2005). The importance of diversity management in an organization needs to be applied to explore and develop potential. Diversity management is as a tool to activate human potential and creativity [8]. Recent research results in Germany showed that diversity management is not only in the workforce, but also in the various needs of customers and business partners, it is believed that practicing diversity and appreciating differences will have a positive effect on society [13]. Robbins (2016) argued that effective diversity management can improve organizational success to explore the widest skills, abilities and ideas that employees may have. Leaders need to recognize that differences among employees can lead to a lack of communication, misunderstandings and conflicts, so to avoid this thing; the leaders need to have good management.

Faculty of Economics is a faculty that has a diversity of individuals both in terms of age, sex, area, and years of service. That diversity sometimes raises behaviors that cause anxiety, discomfort, misunderstanding and even conflict between members of the organization. Based on preliminary observations, some internal conflicts were not disclosed due to communication misunderstandings caused by cultural differences. Language style had a tendency to be perceived differently between employees one another. These conditions often affected the performance of employees in teamwork. In addition, the diversity of age led to workload disparities between members of the

organization, some employees felt overwhelmed with more tasks, because generally when a worker aged, his productivity level declined. So there was a workload gap between members of the organization by age group. The diversity of the knowledge and skills side showed the differences, because it is clear that economic education is a major with a diversity of knowledge and skills, it can affect different ways of thinking and points of view. Because the tendency to address everything based on the knowledge of each individual, it can also increase the miscommunication. In the Department of Economic Education, the proportion of female employees was more than the male employees. Based on the latest data, the ratio of male and female employees is 21: 20, the phenomenon indicates that the middle managerial and top managerial level are male. Data of the Department of Economic Education shows for the last 3 (years), the middle and top managerial level was handled by women in the first year and in the second year until now is dominated by men.

The results of interviews with participant observation technique with MR informants (2017) stated that "... in my opinion minorities are rarely included in various activities". The same thing is also expressed by RF (2017) stated "uncomfortable hell, I want mutation...". The explanation indicated the existence of inconvenience faced by individuals because it was caused by discrimination. A large-scale study of more than 8,000 workers in 128 companies found that an organizational climate that supports age discrimination is associated with lower levels of commitment to the firm. This lower commitment, then relates to lower organizational performance (McAfee, 2012). Love of the same class, race, ethnicity, group has implications for minority discrimination. In the background of work, individuals tend to favor colleagues of their race in performance evaluations, promotional decisions, and salary increases even though such differences are not always found [26].

## 2. Method

### 2.1. Interviews

There were 12 lecturers that we chose at random to be informants and we also chose vice dean of academics, vice dean of student affairs and the heads of the department of economic education. Interviews with lecturers were conducted to find out how attitudes of lecturers to diversity was, while interviews with vice dean of academics, vice dean of student affairs and the heads of the department of economic education aimed to know the pros-cons policy related to diversity.

## 2.2. Observation

The observation was done by identifying non-verbal symbols.

## 2.3. Analysis and validity

Three components of analysis were data reduction, data presentation and conclusion (verification) (Miles and Huberman). Activity was done in an interactive form with the process of flow (cycle), the analysis carried out simultaneously with the data collection process. "It means that the analysis was not done after the whole data was accumulated." Testing the validity of data used data triangulation techniques. That was the technique of testing or checking data by comparing data from a source with other sources to compare data.

# 3. Discussion

## 3.1. Age range and workload

Age is one of biographical diversity parts, information obtained from informants by identifying the age range of senior and junior employees. It can be concluded that the age range between senior and junior employees in the four departments in the Faculty of Economics was ideal, but there were departments in which the age range of senior and junior employees was quite far. They were Department of Economic Education and Management. In both departments, the age range between junior and senior employees was too far, and dominated by junior while baby boomers generation was only a few employees.

From the results of observation and analysis of personnel documents, researchers found that the age range between junior and senior employees was very far in the three departments; Economics of Development, Economic Education and Management. The data showed the most ideal age range was the Department of Accounting which was very good employee equity and the proportion of employees was also equitable. In the Department of Accounting, the range age of junior and senior employees from the youngest to the oldest was from 28 years to 62 years. In the Department of Economic Education, the age range was from 24 years to 64 years. In the Department of Management, the age range was from 28 years to 65 years and In the Department of Economics of Development, the age range was 26 years to 65 years. The number

of baby boomers in the Department of Economic Education occupied the highest level (25%), followed by Accounting 21%, Management 18% and then in the Economics of Development, the percentage of baby boomers generation was 10%.

The phenomenon of age range can even influence the coordination and communication process of senior employees to junior employees or vice versa, then different treatments to junior and senior employees often occurred. From the interviews, it can be analyzed that the age range that was too far between juniors and seniors that caused misunderstandings of communication, such as the lack of junior sensitivity in building more intensive communication with seniors, then the lack of meetings that associated them, so there was no face-to-face meeting. Coordination was done throughWhatsapps, Bbm and other social media that sometimes many seniors did not have. Such misunderstandings can be indicated from several aspects, including different communication cultures, different characteristics. Although the misunderstanding of communication often occurred, not all juniors and seniors experienced it. The interview results also indicated that some senior also appreciated junior and always tried not to burden junior with many tasks.

Workload is an implication of the existence of age range differences too far. Interview results revealed that there was a gap between the junior and senior views of the workload, due to the unequal distribution of workloads. Equal workload was needed to improve productivity and employee performance. Accustomed to work according to the portion, employees can learn to understand the main tasks and their respective functions. Observations in the field showed the same phenomenon, in fact many juniors felt burdened with overwhelming tasks, so they can no longer make the writings in accredited national journals and reputable international journals due to the division of workload with a greater proportion than other employees. It is necessary to change the mindset of junior and senior into professional work, so as to grow the organization with an effective diversity.

On the other hand, the results of field observations with participatory observation techniques showed the fact that by the increasing age, many lecturers experienced a decrease in work productivity, due to the weakening of the senses system, such as sight, hearing, body flexibility, and inability to adjust to changes of environment, such as the rapid development of technology, the demands of competence in the global era and the rapid development of science.

### 3.2. Sex

The result of interview showed that there was no gender bias in managing diversity in Faculty of Economics. Leaders of Faculty gave freedom and leniency to every lecturer to have structural positions if they had qualified competence as well as qualification. This freedom was shown by the existence of several female lecturers who held important positions at the department, faculty and university level. This showed that in the Faculty of Economics, there was no gender bias in the election of heads of departments. Men and women had the same right to compete fair. Field observation showed a phenomenon that was not much different from the results of interviews that had been done. Many female lecturers did not deign when they became heads of departments, because they were afraid of losing time with their family, which caused many women were not willing to occupy a position in the middle and top managerial. So it can be concluded that the Faculty of Economics did not impose any gender bias.

### 3.3. Years of service

In addition to differences in age and sex, the differences in years of service were the content of this study that was caused more by speculation than seniority. A review had been made on productivity-priority relation. Perceptions of people interpreting seniority may be different from one another. If some people said seniority as an old form of work, but some people can say it as a form of work experience. A study explained that tenure has a positive effect on productivity and performance. Another study explained that the term of years of service can also be called seniority that has a negative relationship with the level of absenteeism. The year of service is also a variable that is able to explain employee turnover. A study revealed that the longer a person's years of service is, the less likely he will quit his job.

From the interviews above showed that people's perceptions of years of service indicated the existence of years of service was something that formed seniority based on years of service which ultimately led to work experience. The observations also indicated that the term of years of service was diversity in the Department of Economic Education which can be seen from the age distribution that the years of service varied from 1 year up to 20 years.

## 4. Conclusion

The results showed that the biographical diversity from the age aspect in the Department of Economic Education showed the ideal age distribution, but the age range was so far that the generation Y employees were fewer than the generation X and the baby boomers, which implicated the increase of the workload of generation Y. This phenomenon often became an undisclosed internal conflict. From the aspect of sex differences in the Department of Economic Education, the number of male employees was 23 and the number of female employees was 21. From the years of service, it was 1 year to 20 years. Recommendations included: 1) maintaining diverse workers and creating a positive diversity system; 2) Creating equitable and equitable distribution of workloads; 3) Creating diverse work teams, avoiding gender bias and discrimination against minorities.

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