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The Establishment of Multicultural-Based Team Characteristics in Increasing Institution Productivity of Higher Education in Indonesia

Nur Alim[1] and Syamsuddin[1]

[1]Institut Agama Islam Negeri Kendari, Jl. Sultan Qaimuddin No 17 Baruga, Kendari, Sulawesi Tenggara, 93563, Indonesia
 Email: nuralimbasri@gmail.com
[1]Institut Agama Islam Negeri Kendari, Jl. Sultan Qaimuddin No 17 Baruga, Kendari, Sulawesi Tenggara, 93563, Indonesia
 Email: syamsuddinbugis@yahoo.co.id

Abstract: This study aims to assess the characteristics of the formation of a multicultural-based team component in improving the productivity of higher education institutions in Indonesia. This research is essential because it can describe dynamic team characteristics in the form of interconnected tasks among all elements that should be able to build a good cooperation so that the productivity of higher education institutions as a result of the work of a team can reach the expected level. Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) Kendari has elements of the group of employees and lecturers who have particular characteristics, not only because of differences in ability or gender and age but also derived from the flow of culture of groups, as well as different ethnic groups. This research uses descriptive qualitative method by using approach of management science and cultural study. The results of this study provide a description that in the formation of team characteristics of IAIN Kendari, it considers various things other than factors or aspects of ability/expertise. The elements or dimensions are genders, age, team/group of ideology, and ethnic. The most exciting aspect is the ethnic group. As a heterogeneous society, each team member has local wisdom values that can be internalised into work behaviour as a team member to increase the productivity of the institution. The potential of local wisdom empirically has contributed significantly to institutional productivity.

Keywords: Multicultural based team, characteristic. IAIN Kendari

1. Introduction

Educational institutions are a very complex system. This is because an educational institution consists of various interrelated elements and each has a vital role in the implementation of education. Therefore, it is necessary to characterize effective work teams to improve the productivity of educational institutions. Useful team characteristics in the form of interconnected tasks among individuals will certainly build good cooperation so that productivity as a result of teamwork can achieve the level of performance and productivity as expected. Vice versa, if the character of the working team is not valid, then the expected level of productivity cannot be realised. Therefore, the leaders of educational institutions should have a shared responsibility to form the character of a good and sufficient working team. Svalestuen, F et.al suggests that having high efficient team collaboration is important for employees. It provides a description that the need to build effective and efficient team characteristics in improving the productivity of an institution including educational institutions. In a work team, there are various characteristics of each member whose individual productivity will evolve into institutional productivity.

Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) Kendari as a state religious college located in Kendari City which is the capital of Southeast Sulawesi province has the characteristics of a heterogeneous society. Heterogeneous means the various ethnic /tribe and group/class of ideology. Characteristics of ethnic/tribe in IAIN Kendari ranging from Tolaki, Muna, Buton, Bugis-Makassar, Jawa, Bajo etc.

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Likewise, the group/ideology are both from Muhammadiyah, Nahdliyyin and from other groups/ideological groups.

These characteristics are both challenges and opportunities in shaping multicultural-based team characteristics to improve the productivity of higher education institutions. It takes the lead in forming a work team to change the potential for conflict that leads to increased counter-productive behaviour due to institutional disintegration caused by ethnic/ tribal and group/class issues into a productive team based on the multicultural values of each team member. Furthermore, in building the characteristics of the team to be considered or even become one of the leading concerns is the diversity aspect of team members. In fact, Daft emphasises that one of the leaders' essential jobs is to design the team appropriately by considering the characteristics or specific characteristics such as size, religion, and interdependence.

Baldwin also expresses that a team is not just a group of people working in the same manager or working in a nearby location. But it is a team that shares the responsibility to produce something together. The team is a unique thing because members can not complete their work without working. Therefore, only with teams that work with each other will almost certainly be performing or have high productivity. Colquitt et.al divides the composition of the characteristics of an active working team in order to improve the performance and productivity of an organization that consists of (1) the role of members, (2) the ability of members, (3) personality member (member abilities), (4) difference member (member diversity), and (5) the size of the number of members of the team (team size). This concept indeed returns a clear description that in building efficient team characteristics there needs to be a diversity of members in the sense that they differ from each other within the attribute boundaries for categorising individuals. These categories are probably concerned with observable attributes such as race, ethnicity, gender, education, ideology groups, and age.

The meaning of multicultural is affirmed by Choirul Mahfud that the root of multiculturalism is culture. Thus, etymologically, multiculturalism is composed of word "multi", culture, and ism. Essentially, it contains the recognition of the human dignity that lives in its community with its unique culture. Thus, each individual feels appreciated and feels responsible for living in his community. The denial of society to the need to be recognised (politics of recognition) is the root of all inequalities in various spheres of life. Furthermore, Farida Hanum said that multiculturalism could only be meant to be recognition of cultural pluralism. Cultural pluralism is not a "given", but it is a process of internalisation of the values in a community. From of this, it assumes that the difference in a multicultural perspective is not an excuse to legitimise the determination of the majority to minority groups but an opportunity to collaborate their respective advantages into a distinct advantage. Even a new perspective suggests a security understanding by making use of the concept of locally based religious wisdom. It is stated also that the Multi-Team System (MTS), which consists of a team whose members are practicing various management strategies independently (self-management) achieve higher productivity and that the system of multi-team, which consists of a team of highly cohesive is the most productive.

Based on the above matters, this research is important to describe the formation of multicultural-based team characteristics in improving the productivity of higher education institutions in Indonesia, particularly at the Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) Kendari.

2. Research Methods

This research uses the descriptive qualitative method by using management science and cultural studies approach to give clear and comprehensive description related to the formation of multicultural-based team characteristics in improving the productivity of educational institutions. This research was conducted at Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) Kendari. Data collection was conducted over three months through interviews, observation, and documentation.

3. Results and Discussion

The results of this study revealed that in establishing teams, especially teams work at the head of the faculty and Technical Implementation Unit, the leaders of IAIN Kendari did not only consider factors or aspects of skills/expertise of team members but also consider other factors or aspects. The other elements are gender, age, and group background of ideology or ethnic. They are conducted from the belief that the coefficient of gender and age have advantages of each male, female, young, or old, especially in the form of personality characteristics. For example, for team members who are relatively at the early age is undoubtedly more considered because of his experience on working primarily in solving problems encountered. For relatively young team members, it is undeniably more nimble and tenacious in work. For the male gender, the consideration is the firmness in facing all the risks of the decisions that have been established together in order to achieve the vision and mission of the institute. While for members of the female gender is more due to the calm and softness in dealing with problems and thoroughness in completing the work. In fact, based on a study, it is stated that women have concerns and greater empathy toward others than men.

Apart from age and genre factor, it is considerably important to build excellent characteristics of the team either in faculty or Technical Implementation Unit *(UPT)* level through the element of the group/ class; which is included a group of ideology and ethics. It is considered significant based on the fact that the particular groups like *Muhammadiyah* and *Nahdlatul Ulama (NU)* both have an institutional commitment to develop the nation's progress, especially in the education field. This spirit can build ideal cooperation in a work team to reduce or minimise group ego because everyone has the same opportunity to be creative in their organisation.

Likewise, the ethnic group is one of the primary and unique considerations to determine members of the working team. It is based on the belief that every ethnic or ethnic group has cultural values derived from its own local wisdom. The values of this local wisdom are as follows:

- *Tolaki* society has a special ceremony in which the people undertake it as the way to purge themselves from all the evil works they are doing known as "*mosehe*" which means something sacred or healthy. This ceremony is their local wisdom. In addition, Tolaki people also have a life guidance called "*kalosara*" which appears in various sides of social life. For instance, politeness among others, mutual relationship, mutual respect and appreciation, and value of love and tolerance to others.

- *Muna* society has "*katoba*" culture as a form of the local wisdom of Munanese which contains many positive values that need to be maintained and developed. The study of local wisdom values on "*katoba*" is very relevant to scientific development efforts. The "*katoba*" ritual that is performed for children aged 10-14 years old aims to shape, educate, and foster religious-based local values. Besides, "*katoba*" is more than a ritual of changing the status of children to adult, but also serves as a compromise of religion and tradition, as well as moral education that contains aspects of morality, theology, social and ecological. Therefore, through this "*katoba*", Muna community is compelling with its religiosity since its character is formed with Islamic values from an early age.

- *Buton* Society has many character values, both regarding social and spiritual values, such as folk songs called "*kabanti*". "*Kabanti*" reflects the values of local wisdom on four aspects. First, the religious aspect of Buton society is powerful with the teachings of Islam, both in human relationships with the Almighty God, with fellows, as well as with nature. Second, the norm aspects of Buton society are discipline, justice to the application of the law, and self-consciousness. Thirdly, on the social aspect, the Buton community has excellent values, compassion, mutual care, mutual respect, tolerance for diversity, and mutual respect. Fourth, local wisdom values in Buton community are relevant to the pillars of character education [16].

- *Javanese* society has a philosophy or mindset that is related to the way of life to achieve happiness. The teachings are conveyed in a variety of ways that essentially encourage good personality and personal character. The teachings are conveyed in the form of "*wejangan*" or advice whose contents related to daily practices such as good speech, courtesy, and good behaviour to human beings and God. For example "*ojolerenlamundurungsayah*" (do not stop before feeling tired).

- *Bugis-Makassar* society has local wisdom values that can be internalised in work behaviour as a team. The value of the wisdom is "*malempu*" (honesty), "*mapaccing*" (pure), "*siri*" (if doing something wrong, it will hurt his/her pride), "*magetteng*" (consistency/persistence), "*macca*" (smart), "*maperru*" (awareness), "*sipakatau-sipakalebbi*" (mutual respect), and "*mabbarakka*" (blessing).

Various examples of local wisdom values above belonging to working team members from diverse ethnic and tribal groups at IAIN Kendari which are heterogeneous become the logical premise to be internalised in productive work behaviour. Furthermore, they tend to minimize the conflict which might lead s particular groups or ethnics to feel dominant among others and feel have more power, while other ethnics might feel inferior. Furthermore, this minority is excluded from working team in which they will not have space to foster their creativity to increase their productivity in the institution.

It is not a big issue on logical assumptions but because of historical facts of IAIN Kendari which had experienced a bleak period of prolonged conflict as a form of institutional dynamics that led to the turn of the lead several times before the end of his term. However, it has all been muted since 2009, one of them through the formation of the characteristics of a multicultural-based team.

The successful formation of multicultural-based team characteristics associated with institutional productivity at least empirically can be seen from the stability of the dynamics of the institution, the transfer of institutional status from the *Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam* (STAIN) to *Institut Agama Islam Negeri*(IAIN), the quality improvement of institutional management, the implementation of activities both at the regional level, National and international, cooperation with foreign universities, as well as various other things that can be used as indicator of institutional productivity of Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN)Kendari.

The issues related to the formation of team and its characteristics are still limited although there are many articles that discuss the formation or characteristics of team in various perspectives but have not found articles using interdisciplinary of management science, especially organizational behavior with local culture (multicultural) or in other words, still included in management field which indeed can be used as a reference in building a working team. The research was based on the situation in profit-based companies, not in educational institutions as in this study.

In companies which are engaged in financial services, the characteristics of the working team are mostly related to various criteria of effectiveness. The most durable relationship to the components of the process is indicated by work design, context, interdependence, and many other characteristics. In particular case, the most reliable result in team formation is related to and practical process factor. It is also found that the different effectiveness is based on the team size. In industries which are engaged in new product development, team learning has a substantial positive effect on innovation and speed to promote new products. In addition, democratic leadership styles, initiation of objective structures by team leaders, and positions in organizations are close related to team learning. Virtual work teams in some companies, transactional and transformational leadership styles have relationships with some variables, especially team members' trust. In project architect consultants in Malaysia, a strong team design that plays an effective role can better ensure the client's active participation, including teamwork during the briefing process. It is very important in an effort to understand the clients and their shareholder requirements. In essence, team design also needs to be based on experience and specialisation skills in forming specific teams. In multinational manufacturing companies in Japan,

cross-boundary work teams may be increasingly important to solve problems encountered primarily with the increasing of innovation. In manufacturing and high technology-based companies in China, the characteristics of the organisational structure have an impact on team performance levels regarding new product development. In various companies which are engaged in finance, telecommunications, shipping, oil and consultants in India, China and Malaysia, they found that the quality of teamwork was a significant factor in improving team performance, primarily to enhance the productivity of a team. Meanwhile, in 16 commercial banks in China, there is a relationship between innovation ability and the diversity of Top Management Team (TMT). Furthermore, at the National Centre for Public Administration and Local Government (NCPALG), emotional intelligence is correlated with the achievement of organizational goals, performance, and efficiency and influences trust and cooperation among team members in organizations, particularly in the public sector.

Finally, this study concludes that in improving the productivity of higher education institutions in Indonesia, it is necessary to establish a characteristic of a multicultural-based team, whether it is based on gender, age, group / group of ideology, ethnic groups or ethnic groups. The diversity of the team's elements is of course without ignoring the skill or skill aspects of team members

4. Conclusion

Based on the results of this study, it assumes that in building a working team, we should note the composition of team members to improve the productivity of institutions. Without ignoring the ability or skill factor, there are several factors or other aspects that are also necessary. The elements or points are (1) age, (2) gender, (3) group/ group of ideology, and (4) ethnic group.

Also, in forming a team, multicultural aspects become factors that should not be ignored because of the diversity that could initially trigger the dynamics of institution-oriented. The instability of the institutions can be used as a basis for shaping multicultural characteristics so that negative potential can be a positive and constructive potential in building an active working team. This is because each has local values that can be internalized into the work behaviour of team members so as to support the improvement of higher education institution's productivity especially in heterogeneous areas.

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