

Building Culture of Trust Among Academic Staff and University Leaders

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The aim of this paper is to propose several ways to build a culture of trust among academic staff and university leaders in a higher educational institution. The study was conducted at the Universitas Negeri Padang and it was found that the culture of trust among the academic staff and university leaders were not yet strongly embedded. From several studies that have already been conducted elsewhere show that the culture of trust plays an important role for the effectiveness of an institution, including higher educational institutions. Institutions that have a strong culture of trust among their members were likely to be more effective than those which do not have. Therefore, it is necessary for a leader of an institution or organisation to develop a strong culture of trust among its members.

Keywords: *organisational culture, trust, effectiveness, higher education*

Introduction

Changes in economic conditions in Indonesia and the rapid advancement of information technology requires the supply of a diverse, educated, skilled workforce, and one that is able to adapt to a knowledge-based economy. In this case, higher education institutions play an important role in preparing graduates who are skilled, professional, able to adapt to the advancements in science and technology, and are able to compete in the global society. In other words, a higher education institution must be able to become an effective institution in preparing its graduates.

However, to be an effective higher education institution is not easy. Many factors influence it. One of these factors is trust. Trust very important in both working and personal relationships. Many researches have shown the impact of trust on organisation. Trust among people in the organisation gives a strong influence to the attitude and behaviour of the employees (Colquitt & Rodell, 2011); it could increase or limit the involvement, the willingness to do or to share of the employees (Rosen, 2007); affects organizational performance (Capussela, 2018) and create good team work and collaboration (Mareeva, 2015; Peng, Gong, & Peng, 2016).

Organisations that have a strong culture of trust will increase or improve organisational productivity and competitiveness, because the people in the organisations feel safe and comfortable in doing their work (Guo, Lu, & Song, 2013; “I. Organizational Challenges of Creating Public Trust,” n.d.). Starnes et.al. also said that people in organisations with a strong culture of trust will have no doubt to make their own decisions, make updates, and take risks (Lowman, 2013). Furthermore, organisations that have a high culture of trust will make employees able to see other employees, especially leaders as credible people, that is, people who can be trusted, who show compatibility between what they say and what they do; they feel valued and feel free to express their critical opinion in making decisions, and they also feel treated fairly (Berens, 2007; Schaal, 2003).

More specifically, there are several advantages that can be taken from the existence of a strong culture of trust in the organisation. These advantages include: (1) increase reliability and effectively of leadership; (2) employees will feel safe in their conduct and in expressing their opinions, and they feel treated fairly; (3) employees have the courage to make changes; (4) a

sense of mutual understanding is created between the employees, and communication within the organisation becomes more open; (5) feelings of doubts and rejection among employees will disappear; (6) reduction of stress felt by employees; and (7) organisational efficiency and courage to take risks will increase (Bibb & Kourdi, 2004). On the contrary, the lack of trust will initiate tensions and hostility in the process of interaction, hinder the exchange of information and knowledge and initiate alienation (Selmer, Jonasson, & Luring, 2013). Moreover, Starnes et.al. said that lack of trust in an organisation might give rise to a bad reputation, lack the ability to drive innovation and creativity, and reduce profitability, and will ultimately limit the organisation's ability to evolve and reach its full potential.

From the discussion above about a culture of trust, it is clear that a culture of trust is very important for higher education institution in preparing their students to be able to compete in the global era. A study conducted by Gistituati et al found a culture of trust, especially at Universitas Negeri Padang, as one of 12 state universities in Indonesia, was not yet strong (Gistituati, Susanti, & Suyuthie, 2019). As a result, Universitas Negeri Padang (UNP) still lagged behind other state universities, in terms of quality or effectiveness. Therefore, it is important for university leaders to build strong trust that is embedded especially among lecturers. This paper will propose several ways to build a strong culture of trust in higher education institutions. There are three main topics will be discussed in this paper, namely: what is a culture of trust? What are the factors affecting trust in organisations? And how to build strong culture of trust?

Literature Review

To understand a culture of trust in an organisation, it needs to be understood what is organisational culture and what is trust. From the review of literatures, it can be said that organisational culture has been defined in many ways. Ouchi defines organisational culture as symbols, ceremonies, and tales that give meaning and underlying values and beliefs of the organisation and its members (“Theory Z: How American Business can meet the Japanese W. Ouchi Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1981, xii + 283 pp,” 1981). Little bit different from Ouchi, Lorsch defines culture as beliefs held jointly by top managers in a company about how they must manage themselves and their employees, and how they must carry out their business (Pondy, 1986). While Robbins defines organisational culture as a system of values

shared by members of the organisation, which distinguishes the organisation from other organisations (Levine, 2006). Organisational culture as a set of key assumptions or ideologies, norms, values, and understandings that are created, shaped, sustained in organisation; shared by an organisation's members; and taught to new members as right (Caldwell et al., 2003; Tierney, 2008).

Organisational culture arises from the interactions of people in the organisation (Keyton, 2017). More specifically, organisational culture contains a number of things about what can be done and what cannot be done (Pondy, 1986); organisational culture as a cognitive framework consisting of attitudes, values, behavioral norms, and expectations held jointly by members of the organisation ("Hall, R. H.: Organizations: Structures, Processes and Outcomes, 4th ed. 1987, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall. 358 pages," 1988). Organisational culture must be maintained as the basis of deep assumptions, values, and beliefs that belong together and are seen as very important if the organisation wants to continue to succeed (Goldwyn, 2008).

From the various definitions above it can be concluded that organisational culture can be interpreted as a system of beliefs or ideologies, values, norms, understandings, and expectations that are created, shaped, sustained, shared and held firmly by members of the organisation, including both superiors and subordinates. This organisational culture becomes a guide to the appropriate behavior of people, a characteristic of an organisation, and distinguishes the organisation from others. This organisational culture must be developed and maintained if the organisation wants to continue to succeed. The top managers are people who are responsible for developing and maintaining the culture of the organisation they lead.

Similar to the concept of organisational culture, the concept of culture of trust also has variety of forms because it involves the fields of psychology, sociology, economics and management science. However, from the review of literatures, trust in general can be defined as a situation in which individuals feel confident about something or (Bachmann & Zaheer, 2006; Schaal, 2003; Schein, 1989). If you trust someone, you believe that he/she will never do something that can damage you, even though he/she has the chance (Collard & Gambetta, 1989). This trust can involve the beliefs in oneself or in others, and relate to various dimensions, such as ability, willingness, and behavior. This belief arises from relationships or interactions between individuals (Carlsson, Dahlbäck, & Ahrne, 1991; Mareeva, 2015; Oberle, 2016; Vogel, 2015).

It means that someone must give that trust first and or show trustworthy behavior before he or she gets the trust from others.

From the discussion of organisational culture and trust above, the culture of trust in organisations can be defined as a situation in which individuals within the organisation believe in themselves and in other people in the organisation. These beliefs are shared and held firmly by members of the organisation, and become a characteristic of that organisation. The shared values of trust in an organisation are multidimensional, encompassing cognitive (ability), emotional (willingness), and behavioral dimensions; and also related to various things, both those considered by the organisation to be true or may be those that are considered incorrect. As with organisational culture in general, the culture of trust in the organisation is very dynamic, in the sense that it can change. Therefore, culture of trust in an organisation can be developed. The leader of an organisation is the person most responsible for building a strong culture of trust in his/her organisation.

Research result

As it has been stated above that the culture of trust is dynamic. It means that the culture of trust among people in the organisation can grow and can also be destroyed. Factors that can diminish the level of trust include namely: (1) reliability and dependability; (2) transparency; (3) competency; (4) sincerity, authenticity, and congruency; (5) fairness; and (6) openness and vulnerability (Schein, 1989; Smith, 2008).

Factors that cause mistrust in organization include namely: (1) inconsistent messages. The one thing that is most damaging to a person's trust is the inconsistency of what is said. A leader who is inconsistent with what he conveys will easily dispel subordinates' trust in the leader; (2) inconsistent standards. If the employee feels that a leader has given special treatment to someone, where the treatment is not in accordance with established standards, then the employee's trust will fade with the leader; (3) misplaced benevolence. Managers know that they must do something about employees who like to steal, cheats or dishonest, or embarrass their coworkers. But most managers find it difficult to overcome them. This lack of action makes employees not to trust their manager; (4) false feedback. Telling the truth about employee shortcomings is not easy, especially if you have to tell them about their

performance regularly and face-to-face. But we have to do it. Otherwise, we will not be able to stop employees whose jobs cannot be accepted. This will make employees who deserve praise, who will lose enthusiasm and will become demoralised; (5) failure to trust others. Trusting others can be difficult, especially for perfectionists or workaholics. But if this kind of manages does not delegate some of their authority to subordinates who are considered capable, and always do the job by themselves then the organisation will lose the trust of its subordinates, and the talented employees will leave; (6) elephants in the parlor. If the leader likes to hide problems from his employees, especially about things that are not pleasant, such as the dismissal of one of the employees suddenly, even though the problem has become common knowledge, then employee confidence in the leadership will decrease because they think the leader has hidden something from them. If people think the organisation is acting in bad faith, they will rarely forgive and they will never forget; (7) consistent corporate underperformance. If an organisation or company regularly fails to meet the expectations set by its senior management team, then trust will erode quickly; (8) rumors in a vacuum. When a company is in the midst of a complex situation, there are many opportunities for trust to be break down. Employees know that something important is happening, but if they don't know the full story (maybe the full story doesn't yet exist), they will naturally interpret too much of the pieces of information they get. Rumors circulate, and, in many cases, it will be negative rather than positive. Temporary information vacancies in company life are common, and distrust develops in a vacuum (Caldwell et al., 2003).

From the description above, it can be concluded that there are many factors that influence trust among people within organisation. These factors must be a concern for leaders if they want to build a strong culture of trust in their institutions or organisations.

Discussion

There is no doubt that culture of trust is very important for the effectiveness of an organisation or institution, include higher education institutions. Therefore, it is important for a leader of an organisation to know how to a build strong culture of trust in its institution. By looking at the factors that influence culture of trust in an organisation, there are several ways that organisational leaders can develop a culture of trust. Some of those are presented below.

Identify, Change Behaviour, and Start From the Top

Making cultural changes, including cultures of trust, must begin with behaviour and this change must start from the top or from the leader. As organisational leaders, we may have less satisfactory organisational performance. Suppose we have 6 workers who we think know how to do work, but in reality, only 3 people really want to do good work, while the other 3 only do the work as they wish. The question is if we want the work to be done, whom will we give the work to? Will we leave the work to those who want to do it well, or to those who don't? Under these conditions, generally managers will give jobs to those who want it, and leave those who don't want it. This condition can make people who want to work well become overloaded with work; while others do nothing much. This situation can have a negative effect on overloaded workers. They will be unhappy and dissatisfied because they are overloaded, while others are not.

This condition cannot be allowed to continue because it will make the work atmosphere unpleasant, and there may be mistrust among employees and also between employees and leaders. This condition needs to change. But we have to keep in mind that getting people to work in positive and constructive ways, and to change the culture is not easy. This requires time and effort. In this case, the leaders must always be consistent, credible, firm, patient, and continue to move forwards to the desired changes. If there are members who refuse to make changes, then the leader must be firm and consistent that the changes must be made, but still be patient.

Consistency and firmness are very important factors for cultural change, including in building a culture of trust in an organisation. Consistency and credibility are key factors in building a culture of trust (Fairholm, 1995). Leaders who are inconsistent with the implementation of what has been decided, and also are not credible, will not get trust from the subordinates. Furthermore, leaders who are unable to reprimand employees who make mistakes, while reprimanding others, then these leaders will lose trust from the employees. In addition, an appreciation of what subordinates have done well is also needed in building a strong culture of trust.

Lead by Example

In every organisation including higher education institution leaders play a key role for the success of the organisation. Effective leadership will contribute positively to every administrative process of the organisation, including higher education institutions (Masood, Dani, Burns, & Backhouse, 2006). Furthermore, it cannot be denied that the effectiveness of a leader in influencing the people lies in his behavior in leading. In other words, leaders who succeed in influencing the behavior of employees, including the behavior in believing the leader, are leaders who can be role models by their subordinates. A high level of trust was found in headmasters who were open, accessible, and visible (LeNoir, Cook, & Snyder, 2018). A relationship between exemplary leadership and subordinate behavior, including subordinates' trust toward organisations and the leaders (Alhudhori & Aldino, 2017).

As we know that trust involves trust in oneself and in others, and this arises from the existence of relationships or interactions between individuals within the organisation. Trust in human relationships applies both ways. The idea that a leader must win the trust of his people is a very common matter, but the leaders will not obtain the subordinate's trust if they cannot trust their people. A leader must have the ability and willingness to trust others before he gets trust from others (Boyatzis & McKee, 2006; Karada & Öztekin, 2018). This means if we would like to have trust from others, we have to trust them first. Therefore, it is important for leaders to trust their followers first before they gain trust from them. Workaholic and perfectionist leaders are usually find it difficult to trust their people. However, if a leader wants to gain the trust from the people, he/she must be able to trust his subordinates.

Trust in subordinates can be demonstrated by giving them freedom to try new ways in carrying out their work, to be creative, to grow and develop, to learn, and fail. As the idiom says "Failure is the beginning of success". Therefore, as university leaders who would like to develop culture of trust, they have to avoid blaming lecturers and demean things that are done or stated by them; respect the ideas given by lecturers, even if they may sound silly; avoid forcing the will to the lecturers, do not hesitate to offer support to lecturers, including support for choosing patterns and ways for carrying out their work, and also support when they are in difficult circumstances.

Be Transparent and Communicate Openly

The easiest way for a leader to be known as an untrustworthy person is to keep a secret or hide a lot of things related to the organisation he leads. As we know that members of the organisation do not like if the leader informs new policies or significant changes that occur suddenly. If the leader does this, then the subordinate will feel that the leader does not want to talk to them, and also does not trust them. This feeling of mistrust will be very painful for the subordinates. On the other hand, subordinates will appreciate and like if the leader communicates information openly, both positive and negative, before the policy is taken. In other words, subordinates will highly respect leaders who were considered authentic and trustworthy. School principals' authentic leadership behaviors had positive effects on teachers' perceptions of school culture, including culture of trust. Gallup's survey of 2.5 million manager led teams in 195 countries also found that daily communication with direct reports measurably increased workforce trust and involvement (GUO, 2017; Karada & Öztekin, 2018; Maes, 2013).

It is undeniable that many managers don't know how to have difficult conversations, or conversations that discuss unpleasant things that are related to subordinates, such as "I am not satisfied with what you are doing; this is the standard, this is the hope; but you only do it like this. This is very disappointing". These conversations are simply ignored, or conveyed through innuendo in the hope that subordinates will know what is happening. But the reality is not like that. Subordinates may not really know what is going on, and as a result there is a buildup of disappointment on the manager, and then mounts to a significantly negative situation. This condition can be fatal. It can make the organisational climate unpleasant, subordinates feel hurt, and eventually there is a feeling of mutual distrust.

From this description it is clear that transparency and open communication are important factors for building culture of trust within organisations. It is no secret that every member of the organisation, especially subordinates, is very curious about what is happening in the organisation. They would like to know what has been done by the organisation, and where the organization is going, and what impact it has on them. Therefore, it is very clear for the leaders of the organisation, or the leaders of higher education institution to always be

transparent and establish open communication with all members of the organisation in order to grow a culture of trust among the people in organisation, and even more to believe in their leaders.

Every member of the organisation, especially the leader, must be honest. There is nothing to hide if you want to gain trust in the organisation. Be honest even though it is difficult and unpleasant. In addition, leaders must also be willing to learn to be good listeners. When the subordinates feel heard, they feel valued. Therefore, leaders of higher education institution must be willing to be transparent, communicate openly, listen to their lecturers, and consider lecturers' ideas if they would like to build strong culture of trust in their institution.

Be Fair

The leaders must consciously treat all employees equally. If there is special treatment for someone, it can cause hostility. From the research conducted in the business world, there is a very significant positive relationship between the justice with trust in the organisation (Demir Polat & İSKENDER, 2018; KÜLEKÇİ AKYAVUZ, 2017). From this research it can be concluded that organisational justice greatly influences the culture of trust in organisations and administrators. In other words, the higher the fair behaviour exhibited by the leaders, the higher the subordinates' trust in the organisation and leaders. Conversely, the less amount of fair behaviour in the organisation, there will be lower trust from subordinates in the organization and its leaders. Research finding in the business world is no different from research finding in the education setting. A research in an education setting looked at the relationship between fair behaviour in schools with the teacher's trust in schools and administrators (KÜLEKÇİ AKYAVUZ, 2017). This study concluded that teachers were not treated equally in their work distribution, choice of students, communication and behavior in the school with other teachers and so their feeling of trust for the school and the administrators was damaged.

From the findings above it can be concluded that fair behaviour is an important factor in building a culture of trust toward organisations and leaders. Members of the organisation who feel that they have not been treated fairly will become distrustful with the organisation and the leaders; and vice versa. Therefore, the leaders of the organisation, including

university leaders, must strive to always behave fairly towards the people they lead. This fair behavior can be demonstrated in terms of division of tasks, providing opportunities to grow and develop in career, giving incentives or rewards, communicating, and caring.

Build Harmonious Relationships

A harmonious relationship between members within organisation is necessary for the survival of the organisation. From Gallup's study, it is known that having friends at work significantly increased involvement in the workplace (Schein, 1989). Furthermore, many experts have suggested that harmonious relationships among people within organisations will increase mutual trust between individuals in the organisation, which in turn will provide security and comfort for individuals at work (Guo et al., 2013; Karada & Öztekin, 2018). Therefore, it is very important for leaders, including university leaders to always maintain a good relationship between employees in order to create strong culture of trust.

There are several ways that leaders can build good relationships. The main way to foster harmonious relationships is to make ongoing communication with members of the organisation, and to facilitate members to communicate with each other. As we know that communication is the pulse of an organisation. All organisational problems can be solved through communication, although not all organisational problems are caused by communication (Goldwyn, 2008)(Morse, 1999). Thus we can conclude that communication is a very important thing in the organisation, especially in fostering or building harmonious relationships.

This can be done by greeting everyone, asking about his/her condition, conduct family day activities to establish intimacy and mutual understanding, and visiting each other when there are members who experience disasters or who celebrate happy days. But keep in mind that a harmonious relationship is not just enough by establishing continuous communication. This communication must be truly authentic, based on honesty, sincerity, mutual understanding, and mutual respect for one another. In this case the leader must be able to eliminate selfishness, be able not to impose his own will, and be able not to feel victorious alone (Hoppes & Holley, 2013). Leaders must be able and willing to be good listeners; able to protect the people they lead and are able to be motivators and pioneers in creating good

relationships within the people in organisation. Giving appreciation as soon as possible to members of the organization who have done a good job can also create this good relationship. In addition, leaders must also be able to behave fairly, decisively, but also with attention and affection; appreciate the existence of every individual in the organisation in accordance with his/her conditions; rebuke them well if they make mistakes; always be open; and don't hesitate to apologise if they've made a mistake.

Conclusion

From discussion above it is clear that culture of trust is a very important factor for the effectiveness of an organisation, include higher education institution. Higher education institutions that have a strong culture of trust embedded among the people in that institution will likely be more effective than those that do not. Therefore, it is very important for university leaders to put efforts in developing a strong culture of trust in their institution. By having a strong culture of trust embedded among lecturers and university leaders, it will make higher education institutions easier to survive and to compete with other institutions, especially at the era of globalization or Era 4.0.

There are several things that can be done by university leaders in developing strong culture of trust, namely: (1) displaying leadership credibility, identify problematic behavior, establish work standards, and implement the standards in a consistent, decisive, appreciative, and patient way; (2) lead by example, the leaders have to trust others first, before they get trust from others. It can be demonstrated by giving freedom to subordinates to try new ways in carrying out their work, avoid blaming lecturers and demean things that are done or stated by them; respect the lecturers, avoid forcing the will of the lecturers, do not hesitate to offer support to lecturers; (3) be transparent, establish open communication with all members of the organisation, and be good listeners; (4) treated people equally in term of tasks, opportunities to grow in career, incentives or rewards, communication, and attention; and (5) build harmonious relationships by making ongoing communication with members of the organisation and facilitating them to communicate with each other.

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