

The Role of Organizational Culture and Knowledge Management to Encourage Innovation in Governance in an Indonesian Private University

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ABSTRACT

Universities in Indonesia need to increase their institutional capability to become equal toward their peers in the developed world. One way to improve institutional capability is strengthening university governance. Improving governance is a learning process characterized by the emergence of new knowledge. Creating knowledge is a part of knowledge management that is commonly affected by organizational culture. How this concept works particularly in a university context still needs more exploration. We conducted a case study as a pre-study to reveal the role of organizational culture and knowledge management in governance innovation within a private university context. This study will inspire private universities to manage their organizational culture and knowledge management to strengthen their governance innovation. We suggest propositions that could guide further studies on the same topic.

Keywords: Organizational culture, Knowledge management, Organizational learning, Governance, Private university.

I. INTRODUCTION

Strategic management is a study that aims to describe factors affecting firm performance (Nelson, 1991). In order to have good performance, a firm needs to build competitive advantage and to sustain its source (Bowman, 1974; Rumelt, 1987; Barney 1986). Competitive advantage is mostly derived from intangible assets such as organizational culture (Barney, 1986), organizational learning, brand equity, reputation (Penrose, 1959; Rumelt, 1987; Barney, 1986; Grant, 1996), and knowledge (Penrose, 1959; Winter, 1988). Knowledge is considered the most valuable asset of an organization (Penrose, 1959; Winter, 1988). Since the ultimate form of knowledge creation is innovation (Nonaka, 1994), knowledge management process, which includes knowledge creation, is a vital activity for an organization that would become a source of its competitive advantage.

In Indonesia, along with the growing demand on higher education, competition among private universities emerges, particularly in obtaining prospective students, funding, and educational goals. Private universities also have to compete with public universities as well as their regional/global competitors, manage their limited resources

and follow government regulations especially from Directorate General of Higher Education. One central issue among various regulations in Indonesia higher education is good university governance (Gunawan, 2016).

Governance is a learning process that should be supported by knowledge management (Schwella, 2014). Knowledge management is affected by organizational culture (De Long and Fahey, 2000). Based on the field study conducted in a private university, this paper wants to explore the role of organizational culture and knowledge management in encouraging governance innovation in a private university context. The aim of this paper is to give suggestions for university administrator to understand the role of organizational culture and knowledge management in order to strengthen university governance.

2. THEORETICAL REVIEW

Some of these theoretical reviews have been mentioned in theoretical papers on the relationship between organizational culture type, knowledge creation speed and innovation (Widjaja, 2014). In this paper, these theoretical reviews are used to support the field study on an almost the same topic.

2.1 Governance in University

Some of the topics focusing on corporate governance are the determination of general direction of a firm, supervision and control of managerial action by the executive (Tricker, 1984), relationship between the owner and the executive of a firm and their accountability (Bhimani, 2008; Liu and Lu, 2007; Seal, 2006). Since the 1980s, the concept of governance began to enter the world of universities (Musselin, 2006). As governance needs to utilize various inputs and environmental influences in the form of experiences, data, and information, as well as the knowledge that exists around it (Schwella, 2014), leaders of universities are expected to do the same in order to learn more and improve their governance. This paper will therefore discuss knowledge management.

2.2 Knowledge Management

Organizations are often seen as a place to process information and to solve problems (Nonaka, 1994). The organizations emphasize more on organization efficiency in information processing and decision making. How an organization determines what matters to them and creates knowledge to solve the problem still has not gained any attention. As every organization is dynamically related to its changing environment, it is important for the organization to determine what the problem is, how the organization develops knowledge to solve it and makes innovation (Nonaka, 1994).

Knowledge creation could be described from epistemology perspective and ontology perspective (Nonaka, 1994). Epistemologically, knowledge creation is generated through a continuous dialogue between explicit knowledge and implicit knowledge (Polanyi, 1966). Explicit knowledge or codified knowledge is a knowledge that could be forwarded through formal language systematically. Tacit knowledge is a knowledge that contains personal qualifications that are difficult to formalize or communicate systematically. Mainly it is rooted in acts, commitments, and involves specific context. Therefore, explicit knowledge could be explained in detail and be easily understood or copied by others while tacit knowledge is difficult to understand or imitate. Ontologically, knowledge creation begins with ideas that exist in the minds of each individual which is then developed and stabilized through interaction between individuals, individual

interactions with units, the interaction between units, and unit interaction with the organization (Figure 1).

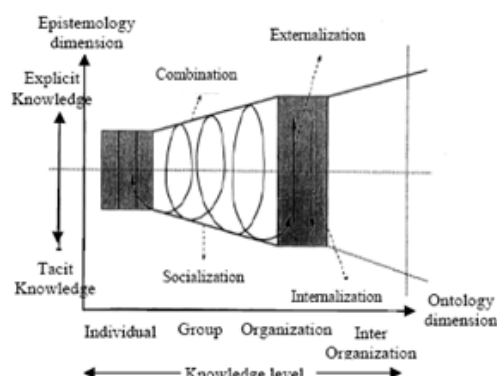


Figure 1. Organization Knowledge Creation Model (Nonaka, 1994)

Firms can also be seen as an integrator of specific knowledge possessed by each individual within the firm in order to produce goods or services (Grant, 1996). To integrate that knowledge, the firm requires knowledge management. Knowledge management deals with creating, sharing, using and managing information and knowledge in an organization (Girard and Girard, 2015). There are four characteristics of knowledge management (Fontana, 2009). First, knowledge management is a value creation practice. Second, the practices are based on knowledge and intellectual assets that are owned by each individual within the organization. Third, the practices are also based on social interactions within the organization that would build social creativity. Fourth, the practices should be managed effectively according to organizational aims.

Knowledge management process would empower or improve the knowledge management basis of an organization which would lead to the possibility to make innovation. The innovation would refresh and maintain the best practice that would always support organizational life and prevent it from becoming obsolete.

Knowledge management implementation is affected by cultural factor (Ross and Schulte, 2005). There are several appropriate forms of cultural factor according to its levels such as national culture, organizational culture, organizational climate, sub-organizational culture, subunit culture, and team climate (King, 2007). Organizational culture also affects organization members' behavior in terms of creating, disseminating, and using of organizational knowledge (De Long and Fahey, 2000).

2.3 Organizational Culture

According to Schein (2004), organizational culture is a pattern of basic assumptions shared by a group as a result of their experience addressing the issue of adaptation to external factors as well as internal integration issues. Therefore, organizational culture is shaped by two basic beliefs (Davis, 1984): beliefs about how to manage a company (internal perspective) and beliefs about how to behave toward external demands. Organizational culture would influence things in the organization as well as how to compete. It also generates a mechanism to adapt and change (Chandradewini, 2017). Thus, organizational culture as a part of organizational internal analysis has an important role toward organizational performance (Wilkins and Ouchi, 1983). Organizational culture can even be a source of sustainable competitive advantage (Barney, 1986).

An organization can be viewed as a social relation where transactions occur between members of an organization (Hatch and Cunliffe, 2006). These transactions are based on recognition of property rights owned by members of the organization (Demsetz, 1967). In this case, organizational culture acts as an effort to make those transactions efficient (Wilkins and Ouchi, 1983; Camerer and Vepsäläinen, 1988).

Moreover, organizational culture also reflects organization orientation about its internal or external focus as well as control and stability or flexibility and discretion priority (Cameron and Quinn, 2006). Based on these orientations, internal or external orientation and control or flexibility orientation, Cameron and Quinn (2006) suggested four types of organizational culture that are clan culture, adhocracy culture, market culture, and hierarchy culture.

Clan culture is a type of organizational culture that emphasizes more on the internal environment as well as flexibility and discretion (Cameron and Quinn, 2006). It treats an organization as a family that encourages collaboration among members to achieve organizational performance (Kreitner and Kinicki, 2008). The focus of the organization is its employees, maintaining cohesivity through employee engagement and consensus, job satisfaction and commitment (Scherer, 1988). Clan culture emphasizes more on recruitment and employee development, and treat their customers as partners (Kreitner and Kinicki, 2008). The aims of clan culture are collaboration through cohesiveness, participation, communication, and enforcement (Scherer, 1988).

Adhocracy culture is a type of organizational culture that focuses more on the external environment as well as on flexibility and discretion (Cameron and Quinn, 2006). Adhocracy culture supports its members to generate creative products through the ability to adapt, to be creative, and to quickly response toward market changes. Power and authority are decentralized toward employees and they are enforced to be risk taking, think in a new way, and experiment to find new ways to run and complete a job. The aims of adhocracy culture are to create newness through the ability to adapt, be creative and agile. The outcomes of adhocracy culture are innovation, growth, and breakthrough products (Cameron and Quinn, 2006).

Market culture is a type of organizational culture that focuses more on the external environment as well as on organizational control and stability (Cameron and Quinn, 2006). Market culture is driven by competition and target oriented. Customers and profit are more important than employee satisfaction. Employees are expected to be quick in response, hard workers and produce high-quality work on time. Market culture also emphasizes on central authority, high level of control, and problem-solving (Cameron and Quinn, 2006).

Hierarchy culture is a type of organizational culture that concentrates on the internal environment as well as integration, stabilization, and control (Cameron and Quinn, 2006). Hierarchy culture encourages the development of a reliable, highly scalable internal system, and the implementation of various control mechanisms (Kreitner and Kinicki, 2008). The outcomes of hierarchy culture are efficiency, punctuality, and reliability of production and delivery of goods (Scherer, 1988). An organization that implements hierarchy culture usually has stable operational activities, is mature and cautious (Shieh and Wang, 2010).

Cameron and Quinn's competing values perspective (2006) has a pluralistic perspective on organizational culture such as Deshpande and Farley (2004), Harris (1998), and Pettigrew (1979). The pluralistic perspective enables an organization to have more than one organizational culture also known as sub-culture (Shield and Martin, 1984);

dominant culture as the most dominant sub-culture, enhancing sub-culture which support dominant culture, orthogonal sub-culture as the neutral one, and counter culture which opposes dominant culture.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

This paper is based on qualitative field research that is a case study. The case study is applied in a private university as the research object with dynamics between organizational culture and knowledge management as the variables. Case study is chosen because it offers more flexibility in revealing empirical conditions of an organization that is not necessarily known to the public (Eisenhardt, 1989).

The unit analysis in this study was a private university while the unit of observation was the faculty and university level. The main data sources for the research were the board of faculties and university. Data were collected by using a closed questionnaire and reinforced with focus group discussion. Then, the data obtained from the questionnaire were tabulated into an organizational culture map (table 1) and a knowledge management process map (table 2).

4. DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows the organizational culture map of the private university. The dominant culture of the organization (both now and expected) is concluded based on the majority of respondents' opinions in total. For current situation there is a disparity in dominant culture that is 4 work units choose hierarchy culture as dominant culture (Faculty of Medicine, Faculty of Economics, Faculty of Information Technology and Rectorate), 2 work units choose clan culture as dominant culture (Faculty of Psychology and Faculty of Law) and 2 work units choose market culture as dominant culture (Faculty of Letter and Faculty of Dentistry). Meanwhile, the majority of respondents choose clan culture as their expected dominant culture except for Rectorate, which chooses hierarchy culture, and Faculty of Law whose total scores for both clan culture and adhocracy culture are the same.

The respondents' data (both current and expected condition) reveal that there is less congruence between Rector, Vice Rectors, Deans and other boards of faculty in the perception of organizational culture. For current organizational culture, except Faculty of Medicine, Faculty of Law and Rectorate, the work units experience different perceptions between leaders and members; while differences in perceptions about the expected culture between leaders and members are seen in Faculty of Law and Rectorate. The condition of incongruence is also shown between the faculties and Rectorate.

The condition of incongruence in perception between leaders and their members may not be too problematic as seen in Faculty of Economics and Faculty of Information Technology because (1) both parties (leaders and members) focus more internally, and (2) members just want higher control so that leaders (Deans) simply increase their focus on stability and control. When members prefer control and stability, it tends to be easier for leaders than otherwise.

A similar situation also occurs in Faculty of Letters and Rectorate where the difference between leaders and members occurs due to differences in emphasis on the external or internal environment. This difference generally does not involve power factor so it does not cause too much problem.

This incongruence issue requires more effort to adapt when the differences involve the issue of authority such as centralization – decentralization. When leaders prioritize

stability and control while members consider more freedom, this tends to lead to conflict, whether open or veiled (Guerra and Martinez, 2005). Examples of this incongruent condition can be seen in Faculty of Psychology and Faculty of Dentistry.

Table 1. Organizational Culture Map of a Private University

		Dominant Culture	
		Current	Expected
Faculty of Medicine	Total	Hierarchy Culture	Clan Culture
	Dean	Hierarchy Culture	Clan Culture
	Others	Hierarchy Culture	Clan Culture
Faculty of Psychology	Total	Clan Culture	Clan Culture
	Dean	Hierarchy Culture	Clan Culture
	Others	Clan Culture	Clan Culture
Faculty of Letter	Total	Market Culture	Clan Culture
	Dean	Hierarchy Culture	Clan Culture
	Others	Market Culture	Clan Culture
Faculty of Economics	Total	Hierarchy Culture	Clan Culture
	Dean	Clan Culture	Clan Culture
	Others	Hierarchy Culture	Clan Culture
Faculty of Information	Total	Hierarchy Culture	Clan Culture
	Dean	Clan Culture	Clan Culture
	Others	Hierarchy Culture	Clan Culture
Faculty of Law	Total	Clan Culture	Clan & Adhocracy Culture
	Dean	Clan Culture	Hierarchy Culture
	Others	Clan Culture	Adhocracy Culture
Faculty of Dentistry	Total	Market Culture	Clan Culture
	Dean	Market Culture	Clan Culture
	Others	Adhocracy Culture	Clan Culture
Rectorate	Total	Hierarchy Culture	Hierarchy Culture
	Rector	Hierarchy Culture	Adhocracy & Market Culture
	Others	Hierarchy Culture	Hierarchy Culture
Total Faculty	Total	Clan & Hierarchy Culture	Clan Culture
	Dean	Clan Culture	Clan Culture
	Others	Clan & Hierarchy Culture	Clan Culture

Incongruent conditions in terms of current dominant culture are not a major problem in an organization where leader gives the right response such as clarification and organizational members are still 'bound' by the shared expectations reflected through the expected dominant culture. However, if it is incongruence in expected organizational culture, the leadership needs a great effort to handle it. For example, there is incongruence between expected dominant culture by Rectorate (hierarchy culture) and expected dominant culture by faculties in general (clan culture). The desire of faculties to have more freedom seems difficult to achieve when Rectorate consider control and stability more important than flexibility and discretion. This certainly raises conflicts and discomfort in the working climate. Rectorate, in this case, have several alternatives to resolve this conflict by managing faculties' perceptions. For example, would it be better

for Rectorate to adjust to the expectations of their members, or to build other subcultures which are the fusion of Rectorate's expectations with faculties, or other alternatives? In principle, the management of perception is important to produce a common perception that will result in better performance (Cameron and Quinn, 2006).

Knowledge management process of the research object is generally quite well (table 2.). The total average scores obtained for knowledge acquisition activities, knowledge distribution, knowledge interpretation and knowledge documentation show scores above the mean score (score=3). Faculty of Dentistry shows the highest knowledge management process while Faculty of Economics presents the lowest knowledge management process scores. In general, the weakest knowledge management process is knowledge documentation issue. This indicates that the existing knowledge management process is not systematically designed.

Table 2. Knowledge Management and Innovation Map in A Private University

	Knowledge Management				Innovation Climate	Innovation Resources
	Knowledge Acquisition	Knowledge Distribution	Knowledge Intrepretation	Knowledge Documentation		
Faculty of Medicine	3,6	3,4	3,8	3,2	3,3	3,3
Faculty of Psychology	3,4	3,3	3,2	3,2	3,2	3,0
Faculty of Letter	3,7	3,6	3,8	3,5	3,8	3,4
Faculty of Economics	3,3	3,4	3,3	2,9	3,4	3,4
Faculty of Information Technology	3,5	3,3	3,9	3,5	3,7	3,3
Faculty of Law	4,0	3,6	4,2	3,4	3,9	2,8
Faculty of Dentistry	4,3	3,8	4,0	4,2	3,9	3,0
Rectorate	3,8	3,9	3,5	3,2	3,7	3,0
Total Faculty	3,7	3,5	3,7	3,4	3,6	3,2

Based on the observation, members of the organization are free to seek data from both internal and external sources. They are also free to interpret the knowledge. This condition encourages the average score of knowledge acquisition process and interpretation of knowledge quite well and higher than knowledge distribution and knowledge documentation. Since there is no direction or plan in acquisition and interpretation activities, the knowledge gained is not documented (as it is considered personal information). Lack of knowledge management planning leads to confusion among organizational members to distribute and document the knowledge.

In addition to the above findings, the general tendency of respondents to give a 'moderate' score in the assessment of knowledge management process is questionable. For example, Faculty of Medicine has so far been considered to be the most 'cohesive' faculty. It has congruent current dominant culture as well as congruent expected dominant culture. This cohesiveness should make the knowledge management process work very well. But in fact, the average score of the faculty's knowledge management process is only 3.5. This score is much lower than that of Faculty of Dentistry which shows incongruence in perceptions of current dominant culture. The faculty has an

average knowledge management process score of 4.1 (the highest average score in the research object). In terms of the climate of innovation, Faculty of Medicine also has the second lowest score of all respondents. This means that cohesiveness in perceptions of organizational culture does not seem to give a strong meaning.

The condition of good knowledge management process is also in harmony with the quite good perception of respondents toward the innovation climate in the university. However, this conditions is less supported by innovation resources. As a result, it is difficult to generate a governance innovation. Focus group discussion reveals that current dominant culture (hierarchical culture) tends to hamper governance innovation. For example, when preparing for new programs and budgets, faculties are given freedom to develop their own programs but this freedom is not supported by the availability of adequate budgets. Rectorate only emphasizes on budget tightening. Consequently, the new program and budget plan only focus on routine activities. Furthermore, faculties do not get enough direction to inspire them to innovate/do new things. □

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion above, there are several conclusions that could be made:

- The incongruent perception, especially in terms of expected dominant culture, tends to trigger an internal conflict that causes discomfort in working climate. University administrator should address this situation properly in order to maintain desired performance and avoid unnecessary conflicts.
- Although the working climate is less conducive due to differences in expectations about the dominant culture, university's knowledge management process is still running well. However, since the knowledge management process is not well planned, the existing knowledge management process does not encourage innovation.
- University administrator needs to put more emphasis on balance between controls for the sake of budgetary efficiency and provision of direction that can inspire new programs to emerge. □

Based on above the conclusions, we suggest three propositions that should be tested in further field research to find more empirical discoveries.

Proposition 1:

The congruence of perceptions especially in term of expected dominant culture encourages a conducive working climate that supports the occurrence of governance innovation in a university. □

Proposition 2:

The incongruence in organizational culture will hamper the university to innovate its governance.

Proposition 3:

Although dominant culture does not support innovation, knowledge management process in a university can still run well.

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