

Management of Leader Quality and Modern Leadership for Religious-Based Higher Education Improvement

Aljuprianus Susar
Universitas Negeri Malang

Imron Arifin
Universitas Negeri Malang

Ali Imron
Universitas Negeri Malang

Mustiningsih
Universitas Negeri Malang

This study aimed to analyze in depth and objectively the quality of modern management of leaders and leadership in religious-based higher education in Indonesia to find a model for higher education quality improvement. This research was based on a qualitative approach known as phenomenology. Data collection was carried out through participant observation by interview and document study. Data analysis and interpretation showed that: (1) The main problem was poor management quality; (2) Weak management quality was caused by nerveless leaders and leadership. This primary factor influences other factors, just as they all affect one another.

Keywords: quality management, modern leadership, religious-based higher education

INTRODUCTION

Education is effort to develop individuals in society. Etymologically, the meaning of education is the process of developing self-abilities and individual strengths. Without education, society will generally live in decline, causing free moral collapse (Zakaria, 2018). The quality of a nation can be measured by the quality of that nation's human resources (Allais et al., 2017; Osman-Gani & -Tan, 1998). This paradigm is shared by the Founding Fathers of the Indonesia, Soekarno-Hatta and his colleagues, with the philosophy of Build Nation, Build School (Soedijarto, 2010). As a factor to develop a great nation, the role of higher education cannot be separated (Wiyono & Wu, 2022). Therefore, it is an obligation of higher education to pay attention of the quality management (Rochmawati et al., 2020). There is a strong relationship between education (campus) and national development (Musdiani, 2010). But, in the last four decades, the education quality in Indonesia has not increased significantly because, in reality, the education quality in Indonesia in

this decade has been below the quality of countries previously under Indonesia such as Malaysia and Vietnam (Soedijarto, 2010).

One of the factors that cause the weak quality of higher education is the leader and leadership (Patras et al., 2019). Traditional management patterns are religious oriented, led by senior leaders from above, adhere to exclusively religious dogma (theology), and maintain the status quo, so they tend to be rigid, cynical and closed to change, too vigilant, and reluctant to cooperate with outsiders (Kusrin, 2018). As a result, many religious universities are left far behind, do not meet the National Education Standards, have not been accredited, and are even threatened with being closed (Gaharu, 2011).

Based on background of the problems, this paper intends to explore the quality of religious higher education in Indonesia, which are organized by church and ecclesiastical institutions with traditional leadership patterns, and then provide proposals and instructions regarding modern leaders and leadership for improving the quality of religious-based higher education management.

Theoretical Study

Higher Education Quality

The quality of higher education is determined by the quality of its management and quality management. Sallis (2014) stated that finding the source of quality is very important adventure. Quality is everything that determines customer satisfaction and the existence of continuous improvement efforts. Likewise, Ishikawa's opinion: "Good quality means the best quality... that will satisfy the consumers' needs" (Kaoru, 1997). According to Ishikawa (1976), there are four aspects of quality: quality, cost, deliver and service. Quality is related to a number of product features, and is free from deficiencies or damage (Maisah et al., 2020). To enhance the quality, a school must pay attention to their clients, solve the amount of problems, rectify their strategies, and organize a good management (Afandi et al., 2021). Relevance, academic atmosphere, internal management, sustainability, efficiency and productivity, leadership, access and equity are the criteria for higher education quality.

Total Quality Management (TQM) is a management strategy applied in education (Kwarteng, 2021; Supriyanto, 2011). The advantages of TQM are improving processes and production, saving time, focusing on customers, and emphasizing teamwork, with a new organizational structure (Switzerland, 2018). Burhanuddin & Supriyanto (2018) further explained that TQM is a strategy which improve higher education quality and performance in teaching and learning system. According to Asiyah (2017), there are five principles of TQM, namely quality development centers, products relevant to consumer needs, processes directed to quality products, strong leadership, and commitment from all higher education stakeholders.

Quality planning is the first step after passing the initial step, namely quality awareness. The stages of quality planning are as follows: identify customers; determine customer needs; product features following customer needs; create a process that is able to produce special products; and transfer or control processes to operations (Sadeh & Garkaz, 2015).

Quality control is the second step. According to Shi & Zhou (2009), to perform quality control is to create, design, create, and service a quality product that is the most cost-effective, most useful, and always satisfying. According to Kaoru (1997), to practice quality control is to develop, design, produce, and service a quality product that is most economical, most useful and always satisfactory to the consumer. To meet this goal, everyone in the company must participate in and promote quality control, including top executives, all divisions within the company and all employees. While the steps are: establish assurance unit; determine the measuring method; establish quality characteristics; reaching an agreement regarding damages; disclose existing shortcomings; observing the quality statistically; and setting quality targets (El-Alfy & Abukari, 2020).

Quality assurance is essential to quality control and integrated quality control (Kaoru, 1997). Therefore, (Amaral & Rosa, 2010) defines that: "Quality assurance is to ensure quality in a product so that customer can buy it with confidence and use it for a long period with confidence and satisfaction." The implementation of quality assurance in higher education is to meet the demands of stakeholders, and according to Sallis, it is the stakeholders who get satisfaction in higher education. Group of study programs, lecturers, students, processes, facilities and infrastructure, academic atmosphere, finance, research and

publication, community service, governance, institutional management, information systems, and cooperation are components of quality assurance (Sumardjoko, 2010).

Quality improvement is the last and most important quality control and assurance step. Ishikawa defines quality improvement as “taking proactive actions to improve existing capabilities (Ishikawa, 1986).” For that, three conditions must be fulfilled: (1). Top management supports innovation; (2). Creating an atmosphere to initiate and avoid failure; (3). Become an institution that can respond immediately to all external stimuli (Ishikawa, 1986). There are five ways to improve quality, according to Ishikawa (1976), namely: (1). Passive improvement: reduce rework, improve work fields, cut costs, and eliminate causes. (2). Active improvement: producing breakthroughs, improving quality, process capability, and equality with customers (3). Immediate vicinity improvement: Plan, Do, Check and Action (PDCA). (4). Priority-Based Improvement: eliminates the main problem of all components. (5). Goal-Oriented Improvement: cut costs, simplify work, and shorten the time.

Leader and Leadership Quality

Higher education leaders are the key to realizing quality higher education, as Doreche’s opinion was quoted by Danim (2006): “I never seen a good school without a good principle.” Leaders are people who direct and influence the activities of organizational members (Martin & Stoner, 1996). Meanwhile, leadership is associated with the ability to influence to direct the people to achieve the goals (Hanafi et al., 2023). Therefore, leaders of higher education are visionaries (Prasojo, 2009). The vision of higher education leaders must be limited by the time of its achievement (Ibrohim, 2018), and following the *tri dharma*. Appointment and dismissal of leaders are following applicable regulations by applying the pattern of “management is how to get things (goals) done with other people” (Prasojo, 2009) and paying attention to contemporary leadership (Husaini, 2008).

Qualified leaders are effective in giving orders, inspiration, building compact work groups, being role models, and being accepted by subordinates (Han, 2015). Besides, common leaders have capability to find out and implement a proper vision for the organization (Burhanuddin et al., 2018). In particular, school leaders are people who are able to act as educators, managers, administrators, supervisors, leaders, innovators, and motivators (Mulyasa et al., 2016). Following Indonesian Government Regulation No. 60 of 1999, the duties of higher education leaders are “to lead the implementation of education, research and community service, foster educational staff, students, university/institute administration staff and relationships with their environment. Therefore, college leaders are managers and professionals” (Harris, 2017).

A professional leader must master the job, have loyalty, have integrity, be able to work hard, have vision, have pride, have commitment, and have motivation (Djafri, 2019). In this case, the rector is not only a leader but also a manager based on authority or assignment, producing something, completing and involving routine things, people who do things (Nafiah, 2015). The rector is assisted by four assistant rectors following their respective fields. They are all referred to as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Rector coordinates all assistant rectors to achieve goals. Therefore, the rector should understand the hierarchy of needs according to Abraham Maslow (Maslow, 2020). Such a big task, of course, should be accompanied by great appreciation, as has been regulated in Laws and Government Regulations.

Leader Quality Management and Modern Leadership

Quality theory in this postmodern era is contemporary theory, which is a theory that oriented to customer satisfaction, product features, and continuous improvement (Charteris et al., 2017). Integrated quality management is one of the contemporary theories that emphasizes higher education’s quality criteria, namely relevant, academic atmosphere, internal management, survival, efficiency, productivity, leadership, access and fairness (Tilaar, 2002). Quality starts from quality awareness, followed by quality planning and control. Quality control followed by quality assurance (Sumardjoko, 2010) continues with continuous quality improvement, because innovation and quality demands are sustainable too (Sunardi et al., 2019). To implement quality management, contemporary leaders and leadership are needed, namely visionary,

democratic, autonomous, team, inclusive, managerial, educator and holistic (Abbasiyannejad & Silong, 2015).

Contemporary leaders and leadership are vision-oriented and can influence all elements to achieve the vision (Walker & Kužnin, 2017). Democracy because it comes from below, the result of the election of others and working together with subordinates, not hiring or commanding subordinates. Autonomous due to the independence of higher education management. Team or top leadership treats employees as partners, technology-based, vision-focused, global partners (Abbasiyannejad & Silong, 2015). Critical inclusion is open to change by maintaining the values of identity and integrity of religion and nation. Managerial skills with the ability to make strategic planning, organizing, coordinating, controlling, and evaluating. Managerial skills are combined with holistic skills, namely as educators, administrators, supervisors, leaders, innovators, and motivators (Zjulla, 2015).

Modern leaders and leadership, described above, synergize with quality management. Modern leaders and leadership can apply quality management. Thus, the purpose of this study was to find the causes for the weak quality of leaders and leadership which led to weak management of higher education using a causal diagram, Ishikawa Fishbone Diagram.

METHOD

Following the purpose of the research, we use qualitative method. This research use phenomenology and a naturalistic approach. The writer put forward three assumptions: (1) regarding reality, the focus of the research was a plural reality, as an arrangement that was related to one another in religious-based higher education; (2) regarding the researcher and the respondents, both are interacting with each other by actively participating in the university; (3) regarding the nature of truth, naturalistic research tends to be more detailed in description, not on generalization. We use phenomenological study because this research examines an organization's social processes, namely in the religious college (Aagaard, 2017).

Phenomenology is a research method that try to build an understanding of reality (Aagaard, 2017). This understanding is built from the informants' point of view about what they think, say and do subjectively. Therefore, collecting data is by interviewing the informants in depth and openly. The informants in this study were all elements of the top leadership of higher education and permanent lecturers. Interviews took place both at the office and at the informants' homes. The interviewer writes down all of the informants' answers, and then transcribes them in field notes. After that, a taxonomic analysis was carried out using the Ishikawa Fishbone Diagram technique, which explores the causes of the problem of weak leaders and leadership (Tague, 2005). The steps of the quality diagram: (1) formulate quality problems. (2) looking for the factors causing it. (3) looking for causes in more detail until saturation. (4) input all into the primary and secondary bone, tertiary until saturated. A theme analysis was held after conducting a taxonomic analysis using the diagramming technique (Tague, 2005).

In this study, there were three types of data collection techniques, namely: (1) in-depth and open interviews, according to the sub-focus, namely on the appointment of leaders, qualifications of leaders, managerial functions of leaders, performance of leaders, awards, and the relationship between higher education leaders and the Private Higher Education Organizing Agency (BPPTS). (2) direct participation of researchers in higher education as lecturers and leaders. (3) review of written documents. The sample was "purposive" following the focus of the study, namely one of the religious-based higher educations in Indonesia; with consecutive samples: leaders of the organizing body, leaders of higher education, lecturers and students; continuous sampling according to sub focus; and the results obtained after repeated until it reaches the saturation point.

About data analysis, because the researcher has determined the place of research, sub-focus, and informants, the researcher no longer conducts domain analysis but directs taxonomic, structured and thematic analysis, namely conducting focused interviews based on sub-focus according to Spradley's analysis model (Wijaya, 2018).

FINDINGS

Leader Strengths and Leadership Patterns

Using the Ishikawa Fishbone Diagram technique, the strength of leaders and leadership of religious-based higher education was found. Leaders were willing to be leaders because of their personal belief in God's leadership, so leaders have a commitment to the principle of full obedience to the leadership (BPPTS).

Leaders carry out their duties as leaders with the principle of being willing to sacrifice (energy, time and personal funds). Leaders adopt the leadership model as servants who serve. Leaders involve everyone because of the fellowship principle. Young leaders respect the seniors and senior leaders respect the young so there is excellent cooperation. Even though there is no reward in the form of benefits concerning leadership duties, leaders are responsible for carrying out their duties (Taylor et al., 2007).

Weaknesses of Traditional Leadership and Leadership Patterns

With the Ishikawa Fishbone Diagram technique and taxonomic analysis, it was found that seven factors describe the weak quality of leaders and traditional leadership applied in the religious colleges studied. The factors with each of these causes are described descriptively as follows:

Leader Appointment Patterns

From the data from the taxonomic analysis, it was found that the problem of the leaders and leadership quality is rooted in several reasons in the following sequence: Leaders have difficulty starting leadership. Because the leader must first build the trust of his subordinates. This was due to the undemocratic pattern of appointment of leaders by BPPTS. The appointment of leaders was in accordance with the leadership system and pattern applied by BPPTS, by the institution's Articles of Association, which has been a preserved tradition from the start.

Qualification as Leader

Because of the appointment pattern, leaders are seen not at managerial abilities but at their academic degrees. This is seen as an important factor in the prestige and the institution prestige. The leader's academic title is considered a plus among theological higher institution in Indonesia. The appointed leader is a person who becomes a senior in the institution, without considering leadership and management competencies. Seniority is considered loyal to the institution among a large number of workers who resign and leave the institution. Members' dissatisfaction was caused by dissatisfaction with the provisions and policies of the BPPTS.

Leader Regeneration

One of the consequences of an undemocratic pattern is the weak regeneration of leaders. Because the appointment of leaders is the prerogative of BPPTS, it weakens lecturers to prepare themselves to become leaders. In addition, there was no encouragement from BPPTS for lecturers to be ready to take on big responsibilities as leaders. Because the leader cannot prepare the next leader except only to prepare the teaching staff. In reality, too, there was no open and planned effort on the part of the BPPTS to prepare the leaders. There was no regeneration in a planned and sustainable manner.

Managerial Functions of Leaders

Still related to the qualifications of the leaders above, the weak quality of leadership is also caused by the weak management function of the leaders. The findings showed the reasons for the management function weakness, namely: A leader's managerial ability does not qualify as a leader. The competency of leaders as evangelists and teachers. Managerial competence is not a requirement and demand for BPPTS. Their main conviction relates to their primary calling as preachers and teachers of the people. That is why managerial functions are not functioning well.

Leader Performance

Weak leadership qualities can be seen in the attention and energy of leaders being diverted to tasks that are not really their main task, such as seeking operational costs and institutional development. This was done due to the limited financial support of BPPTS and the weak economic capacity of students and the small number of students. This is due to the provisions for student admission, namely belief in God's call to become God's servant (His servant). The BPPTS has not played the role it should have, as stated in the laws and government regulations regarding higher education.

Leader Vision

Vision is one of the important strengths of a leader, however, the research findings reveal that leaders of theological higher institutions are not allowed to have their own vision. On the contrary, they are required to follow the vision of the founders of the institution. In fact, the vision of the founders of this institution was not the vision of educational institutions but the vision of church and ecclesiastical institutions. The absence of the vision of educational institutions leaders is followed by the absence of a written operational and strategic plan and a master development plan.

Reward for Leaders

The problem of leadership and leadership in theological higher institutions in Indonesia is also related to the small number of rewards in the form of salaries given by BPPTS. Big task load, while small rewards. This is because BPPTS adheres to the principle that position and service are dedication. The principle of self-sacrifice is very much influenced by the pietist tradition.

DISCUSSION

Based on the data described above, the problems of leaders and leadership are related to appointment, qualifications, managerial functions, sustainability, performance, rewards and vision. Appointment of leaders with a non-democratic pattern; leader qualifications based more on loyalty, seniority and academic degrees; so that the college is experiencing a crisis of leadership cadres. Those who are appointed are those who do not have managerial skills, as a result the performance of the leader is weak. All of this is rooted also in the vision of religion into a vision of education (Day et al., 2014).

Furthermore, by conducting a more in-depth analysis (component analysis), the researcher found the causes of the weak leader and leadership problems as seen in the main bone connected to the fish head (weak leadership and leadership). The root of this main problem is still caused by several factors present in the small bones, and each of these small bones is also caused by even smaller factors, as seen in the Ishikawa Fishbone diagram below (Tague, 2005).

With the Ishikawa Fishbone diagram and based on theme analysis, a special theme was found, namely service management (Taylor et al., 2007). All the leaders and members of this higher institution play a role with the principle of serving without demanding wages. The involvement of personnel in all organizational structures is based on willingness and obedience to the leadership without demanding compensation, regardless of age and title, they can work well together and can coordinate with one another with the principles of service and devotion to God and the institution where they work. The management of this service is a strength to realize the quality of management in these colleges (Taylor et al., 2007).

By joining and participating in the higher institution, a theme was found regarding the weakness of management quality. Religious higher education falls between six dichotomies, namely: (1) the dichotomy between the implementation of the Foundation Law and the National Education Law; (2) the dichotomy between obedience to religious leaders and state leaders; (3) the dichotomy between an exclusive theological tradition and the demands of inclusive education; (4) dichotomy between the management of the Director General of Higher Education (DIKTI) of the Ministry of National Education of the Republic of Indonesia and the General Director (Dirjen) of Catholic Community Guidance of the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia; (5) the dichotomy between the vision and mission of religion and higher education thus ignores the dharma of education and research; (6) dichotomy between interdenominational

and denominational. Interdenominational institutions find it very difficult to get sponsorship support from denominational institutions because of the problems of cooperation and independence of each denomination.

There is a close relationship between the results of this study and the findings that have been stated at the beginning of this paper, that higher education that apply traditional leadership and leadership patterns are more likely to experience stagnation of progress, let alone more exclusive religious colleges (Tibo, 2017). In particular, there is a relationship between the results and the findings which state that leadership and leadership patterns in religious-based higher education are the same as traditional patterns (Sallis, 2014).

Traditional patterns tend to be inflexible, rather closed, and can provide opportunities for leadership manipulation practices, and conflict with top management patterns (Sallis, 2014). This model is suitable for leadership of church institutions, not for leadership of educational institutions. This pattern also results in high level of intervention by the organizing body. And this pattern contradicts the nature of higher education, which should be autonomous in management (RI Law Number 20 of 2003), autonomous in academic, operational, personnel, financial and academic management (Government Regulation No. 19 of 2005). The apostolic pattern is incompatible with contemporary management, namely quality management, which emphasizes democracy, autonomy, and service quality that focuses on customer satisfaction (Sallis, 2014).

Higher education institutions that are advancing in this globalization era are implementing contemporary leadership patterns. Contemporary leaders and leadership require a leadership and/or team to be elected based on a democratic voice and to lead democratically, not by ordering let alone coercing (Winkler, 2009).

Leaders are given autonomy to manage higher education, form team leadership that works together, and have holistic competence (Sunardi et al., 2019). For that reason, this contemporary pattern demands managerial abilities, which can function as management elements, from planning to evaluation (Hamdan, 2001). Such management functions are accompanied by the managerial ability of leaders to influence all to realize the university's vision (Hamdan, 2001). If this is a requirement for contemporary leadership and leadership, then apostolic patterns, academic degrees and/or seniority alone are no longer relevant as this modern leadership pattern.

All improvement efforts and quality improvement stated in the discussion of the research results above, of course, starts from the organizing agency. It needs a high commitment to play a role as an organizing agency so that it can organize a religious higher education institution by the nature of higher education and by the law on higher education and not the law on foundations. In addition, it is necessary to formulate the vision and mission of a religious higher education institution as an educational institution, not a religious vision and mission (RI Law Number 19 Year 2003; RI Law Number 12 Year 2012).

To overcome this dichotomy and weaknesses, the Organizing Body needs to consult with the Director General of Christian Community Guidance (Religion) and the Director of Higher Education (Education), and have a dialogue with elements of the leadership of the religious-based higher education it organizes. After these two things are achieved, then apply quality management, such as integrated quality management, particularly contemporary leadership and leadership patterns. In this way, the religious-based higher education will reach national and even international quality standards.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research and discussion, several conclusions can be drawn: (1) Some of the religious colleges studied, although long, have been stagnant for years due to weak management of leaders and leadership so they did not reach the minimum standard of national quality education; (2) The weak quality of leaders and leadership caused the weak quality of management of the religious colleges studied. The weak quality of leaders and leadership was caused by the weak management quality of the Organizing Body (BPPTS) and by applying traditional management patterns that are centralized, exclusive, from the bottom up, overly alert, led by seniors, oriented to rules (theology) rather than goals; (3) There was no way

to improve the weakness of management other than applying modern management by improving the quality of leaders and leadership, and applying a leader model that was visionary, democratic, autonomous, team leadership, critical, inclusive, managerial, and with holistic skills. To overcome the weakness of management, starting with overcoming the weak quality of leaders and leadership in today's context and demands. For this reason, the model of modern leadership and leadership is a relevant model for quality management, which in turn will improve the quality of higher education to reach national and even international standards.

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