

The effects of organizational culture and organizational communication on lecturer performance

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to examine the direct effects of organizational culture and organizational communication on the performance of lecturers in private higher education institutions offering Midwifery Study Programs in North Sumatra, Indonesia. A survey method with a path analysis approach was employed to analyze the relationships among the research variables. The study involved 172 lecturers, selected from a population of 310 permanent lecturers using the Isaac and Michael sampling formula. Data on organizational culture and organizational communication were collected using Likert-scale questionnaires, while lecturer performance was assessed through direct observation. The findings revealed that organizational culture had a positive direct effect on lecturer performance ($p = 0.222$), with innovation and risk-taking representing the strongest contributing dimension. Organizational communication also had a positive direct effect on lecturer performance ($p = 0.181$), with the relationship dimension providing the greatest contribution. These findings indicate that strengthening organizational culture through innovation and fostering effective organizational communication through positive interpersonal relationships can improve lecturer performance in private higher education institutions.

Keyword: organizational culture; organizational communication; lecturer performance; higher education; path analysis

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1. INTRODUCTION

Higher education institutions, as educational organizations entrusted with the implementation of the *Tri Dharma of Higher Education*—namely education, research, and community service—are expected to continuously enhance their competitiveness, institutional performance, productivity, quality, relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency. Achieving these objectives requires comprehensive improvements across all components of the educational system. Among these components, human resources constitute one of the most critical elements. In particular, improving the quality of academic staff is essential for strengthening institutional performance and ensuring the effective implementation of the *Tri Dharma*, thereby enabling universities to provide high-quality educational services to both students and society.

Within the educational domain, universities are responsible for producing graduates who possess not only sound knowledge but also appropriate competencies, professional skills, and ethical values. Accordingly, teaching and learning activities should foster intellectually capable, morally responsible, and highly skilled graduates. To accomplish this objective, lecturers are required to demonstrate comprehensive pedagogical competence, encompassing the ability to design, implement, and evaluate effective teaching and learning processes.

In the research domain, higher education institutions are expected to generate new theories, concepts, methodologies, models, and scientific knowledge that contribute to the advancement of science, technology, and culture. Consequently, lecturers are expected to develop innovative ideas and scholarly contributions through research activities, textbook development, scientific publications, and other academic works. The production of high-quality research outputs and scholarly publications serves as an important indicator of lecturers' professionalism and academic performance.

In terms of community service, higher education institutions are expected to contribute their knowledge and expertise to support social development and national progress. Universities should therefore function not merely as isolated centers of knowledge but as service-oriented institutions that actively engage with communities by providing professional expertise, educational support, and community development initiatives. Through this role, higher education institutions can create meaningful societal impact while fulfilling their broader social responsibilities.

Preliminary data obtained from the Institutional Affairs Division of the Regional Higher Education Service Institution (Kopertis Region I), North Sumatra, revealed relatively low research and community service productivity among lecturers in private midwifery study programs. In 2014, only 20 lecturers conducted research activities, while no lecturers participated in community service programs. In both 2012 and 2013, only one lecturer conducted research, and no community service activities were reported. These findings indicate that lecturers' performance in fulfilling the research and community service components of the *Tri Dharma* remained considerably below expectations.

According to the performance model proposed by Colquitt et al., employee performance is generally influenced by four major components: organizational mechanisms, group mechanisms, individual characteristics, and individual mechanisms. Organizational mechanisms include organizational culture and organizational structure. Group mechanisms consist of team processes, team characteristics, leadership style and behavior, as well as leadership power and influence. Individual characteristics comprise personality, cultural values, and individual ability, whereas individual mechanisms include job satisfaction, stress, motivation, trust, justice and ethics, and learning and decision-making processes.

Similarly, Newstrom's performance model identifies organizational culture, leadership, communication, and motivation as the primary determinants of organizational performance. Furthermore, organizational culture itself is shaped by both formal and informal organizational structures.

Considering both the Colquitt and Newstrom performance models, several key factors consistently emerge as determinants of employee performance, namely organizational culture, competence, organizational communication, and motivation. These variables therefore provide a theoretical basis for examining the factors influencing lecturers' performance in higher education institutions.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Lecturer Performance

According to Timpe, performance is *"the culmination of three interrelated elements, namely skills, effort, and the nature of external conditions."* Bernardin and Russell define performance as *"the record of outcomes produced on a specified job function or activity during a specified time period."*

According to Robbins, as cited in Rivai, performance is a function of the interaction among ability (A), motivation (M), and opportunity (O), expressed as $\text{Performance} = f(A \times M \times O)$. This means that performance is determined by an individual's ability, motivation, and opportunity, with opportunity representing the highest level of performance attainment.

The quality of lecturers' performance in higher education constitutes an essential component of academic professionalism. Lecturers' competence is fundamental to achieving the objectives of higher education, as they are expected to bring about meaningful changes that enable students to develop strong moral values and accountability in applying the knowledge, technology, and information they acquire.

The primary responsibility of lecturers is to transform, develop, and disseminate knowledge, technology, and the arts through education, research, and community service, collectively known as the *Tri Dharma of Higher Education*.

Based on the foregoing discussion, lecturer performance can be defined as the outcomes achieved from work carried out within a specified period. In this study, lecturer performance consists of three components: education and teaching, research, and community service.

B. Organizational Culture

According to Robbins, organizational culture is a shared perception held by organizational members regarding a system of shared meanings. From the same source, Robbins also defines organizational culture as the fundamental philosophy that guides organizational policies in managing employees and customers.

Organizational culture gives rise to norms that are accepted by organizational members as unwritten standards of behavior. First, norms are established only with respect to matters considered important by organizational members. Second, norms are accepted to varying degrees among members; some norms are fully accepted, while others are only partially accepted. Therefore, norms represent unwritten agreements that are implicitly understood and followed by all organizational members.

According to Owen, organizational culture is defined as the norms that inform organizational members about what is acceptable, the dominant values that are prioritized by the organization, the basic assumptions and beliefs shared among organizational members, the rules that must be learned to become accepted as members of the organization, and the philosophy that guides the organization's relationships with employees and subordinates.

Research conducted by Robbins and Judge identifies seven primary characteristics that collectively capture the essence of organizational culture: (1) innovation and risk-taking, (2) attention to detail, (3) outcome orientation, (4) people orientation, (5) team orientation, (6) aggressiveness, and (7) stability.

Based on the foregoing discussion, organizational culture can be defined as a set of values and norms that are accepted, agreed upon, and practiced by members of an organization, specifically the lecturers of midwifery study programs. In this study, the indicators of organizational culture are: (1) innovation and risk-taking, (2) attention to detail, (3) outcome orientation, (4) people orientation, (5) team orientation, (6) aggressiveness, and (7) stability.

C. Organizational Communication

According to Bernard and Garry A. Steiner, communication is the transmission of information, emotions, ideas, skills, and other forms of expression through symbols, words, images, numbers, graphs, and other media. The activity or process of transmitting these messages is referred to as communication.

Robbins states that an organization is a systematic form of cooperation among a group of individuals established to achieve predetermined objectives. It is regarded as cooperation because it involves interactions, relationships, and communication among individuals who perform similar or different functions (subsystems), thereby forming an integrated system to accomplish shared goals.

Goldhaber defines organizational communication as *"the process of creating and exchanging messages within a network of interdependent relationships to cope with environmental uncertainty."* In other words, organizational communication is the process of creating and exchanging messages within a network of mutually dependent relationships to address uncertain and continually changing environments.

Based on the foregoing discussion, organizational communication can be defined as the interdependent exchange of messages among individuals within an organizational environment. The indicators of organizational communication in this study are communication messages, interdependence, relationships, and the organizational environment.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a survey method using a path analysis approach. The study examined and analyzed the relationships among the research variables and measured the influence of one variable on another. The research was conducted at the Midwifery Study Programs of Private Higher Education Institutions in North Sumatra from May 2015 to June 2016.

The population consisted of all lecturers of the midwifery study programs at private higher education institutions in North Sumatra. The inclusion criteria required that the lecturers be full-time faculty members, hold at least a master's degree, and possess a National Lecturer Identification Number (NIDN). Based on these criteria, the total population comprised 310 lecturers.

A sample represents a subset of the population possessing its characteristics. According to Arikunto (2006:136), a more accurate sample size can be determined using the Isaac and Michael formula. Based on this approach, a total sample of 172 lecturers was obtained.

The research instrument was used to collect the research data; therefore, its validity and reliability were essential in determining the quality of the data to be analyzed in order to draw research conclusions. To obtain valid and reliable research instruments, instrument development was carried out in accordance with measurement theory. The instrument employed in this study was a non-test instrument.

In this regard, Djaali and Muljono proposed the following procedures for developing research instruments: (1) synthesizing the theories related to the concept of the variable to be measured; (2) developing the dimensions and indicators of the variable based on the established construct; (3) preparing an instrument blueprint in the form of a specification table containing the dimensions, indicators, item numbers, and the number of items for each dimension and indicator; (4) determining the measurement scale or parameter along a continuum; and (5) constructing the instrument items in the form of either statements or questions.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the hypothesis testing, the following findings were obtained.

A. Organizational Culture Has a Direct Effect on Lecturer Performance

Organizational culture has a direct effect on lecturer performance, with a path coefficient of $p_{51} = 0.222$, indicating that the direct effect of organizational culture on lecturer performance is 0.222. This coefficient implies that a one-unit increase in the organizational culture variable will increase the lecturer performance variable by 0.222 units, assuming that the other variables remain constant.

This finding is consistent with the study conducted by Dirwan, which reported that organizational culture has a significant direct effect on the performance of lecturers at private higher education institutions. A similar finding was reported by Qomariah, who found that organizational culture has a direct effect on lecturer performance at private universities in Jember Regency. These findings are also in line with Triguno's view that work culture is reflected in productive work behavior that can be measured through hard work, discipline, productivity, responsibility, motivation, creativity, innovation, responsiveness, and independence. This implies that work culture forms the foundation for producing high-quality work processes. Therefore, lecturers who aim to achieve high-quality performance must be supported by a strong work culture accompanied by appropriate work processes.

As a system of shared values concerning what is believed to be important and how work should be carried out, organizational culture generates organizational norms and performance. Such a value system is expected to be formulated through mutual agreement among organizational members and implemented as agreed-upon rules and norms to ensure that organizational objectives are effectively achieved. In this study, organizational culture was measured using several indicators, namely innovation and risk-taking, attention to detail, outcome orientation, team orientation, and people orientation. Among these indicators, innovation and risk-taking contributed the greatest influence compared with the other indicators.

As educators and instructors in private midwifery higher education institutions, lecturers are expected to continuously introduce improvements in their educational and instructional activities. Such improvements imply that teaching should not merely rely on the same instructional patterns or learning models each academic year, as this would not be consistent with the expectations of higher education institutions, particularly private universities, which place greater emphasis on achieving optimal outcomes.

Since lecturers are regarded as one of the key contributors to developing competent and highly qualified human resources, they are expected to continuously innovate in their teaching practices, including instructional planning, learning materials, classroom instruction, and other aspects of the teaching process. Through these innovations, students, as future human resources, are expected to graduate with the knowledge, technological competence, and professional capabilities necessary to compete within their respective fields.

To ensure that educational and instructional objectives are achieved as expected, namely producing graduates who are competent, intelligent, and competitive, lecturers must continuously introduce innovations into their educational and instructional responsibilities. Such innovations should be supported by scholarly approaches and scientific research capable of generating new knowledge and contributing to the advancement of educational quality.

Research, as an effort to generate innovation in academic duties, should be conducted with the courage to explore new approaches while remaining consistent with the rules and norms established by higher education institutions. The willingness to take risks in improving lecturers' performance refers to the courage to implement academically sound initiatives that benefit both the institution and academic responsibilities, even though such initiatives may not always be fully accepted or supported by institutional leaders. In some cases, lecturers' research and community service activities receive limited support from university management because lecturers are often expected to focus primarily on teaching and administrative duties. Under such circumstances, lecturers are required to take professional risks, as these activities ultimately contribute positively to their performance and are aligned with the objectives of the midwifery study program.

B. Organizational Communication Has a Direct Effect on Lecturer Performance

Organizational communication has a direct effect on lecturer performance, with a path coefficient of $p_{53} = 0.181$, indicating that the direct effect of organizational communication on lecturer performance is 0.181. This coefficient implies that a one-unit increase in the organizational communication variable will increase lecturer performance by 0.181 units, assuming that all other variables remain constant.

The findings are consistent with the study conducted by Sehfuudin, which reported that organizational communication has a positive effect on employee performance, indicating that better organizational communication leads to improved employee performance. This finding is also consistent with Hovland's view

that communication is the process through which an individual, or communicator, conveys stimuli—typically in the form of verbal symbols—to influence the behavior of others.

In this study, organizational communication was measured using the indicators of communication messages, interdependence, relationships, and the organizational environment. The findings indicate that, among these indicators, the relationship dimension made the greatest contribution to lecturer performance compared with the other indicators.

Effective working relationships among lecturers, between lecturers and administrative staff, between lecturers and institutional leaders, and between lecturers and students facilitate the exchange of accurate messages and information among organizational members. Lecturers should receive clear and consistent information from the head of the study program regarding teaching and learning activities. The information communicated should remain consistent regardless of whether it is conveyed by administrative staff, students, or fellow lecturers.

As social beings, lecturers require interaction with others in every aspect of their professional responsibilities in order to obtain guidance and direction regarding the tasks they are expected to perform. This is particularly important in fulfilling the *Tri Dharma of Higher Education*. However, leaders of study programs or other members of higher education organizations within private midwifery study programs in North Sumatra sometimes withhold or fail to provide essential information. Consequently, lecturers who do not receive such information may experience limitations that adversely affect their work performance.

Clear and consistent information provided by university leaders regarding lecturers' duties and responsibilities, supported by effective communication, harmonious cooperation, and a conducive working environment, represents an important effort to help lecturers who have not yet achieved optimal performance improve their professional capabilities. Such conditions also reflect the existence of positive interdependence among organizational members. Organizational communication should not create the impression that institutional leaders communicate arbitrarily with lecturers as subordinates, particularly when the information being communicated concerns academic matters that lecturers are entitled to receive in a clear and appropriate manner.

Lecturers working in private midwifery study programs often encounter uncertainty in institutional policies introduced by either university owners or institutional leaders. This situation frequently arises because the academic system adopted is a package-based curriculum, requiring students enrolled in the three-year diploma program in midwifery to complete their studies within the prescribed three-year period. Consequently, lecturers' professional responsibilities in higher education are often neglected, while administrative duties receive greater priority in order to ensure students graduate on schedule. In some instances, even unprofessional practices are adopted to achieve this objective, resulting in lecturer performance that shows little improvement over time. Therefore, university leaders should establish positive working relationships and conducive working conditions supported by clear and well-directed policies to enable lecturers to perform their professional responsibilities more effectively.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the data analysis and discussion, it can be concluded that organizational culture has a positive direct effect on the performance of lecturers in private higher education institutions offering Midwifery Study Programs in North Sumatra. Among the dimensions of organizational culture, innovation and risk-taking demonstrated the greatest contribution to lecturer performance. In other words, the stronger the organizational culture in promoting innovation and encouraging appropriate risk-taking, the higher the level of lecturer performance. Strengthening organizational culture can therefore be achieved by fostering innovation and responsible risk-taking that are oriented toward teamwork, work outcomes, concern for others, and attention to detail. In organizations with a strong culture, shared values are deeply understood, embraced, and practiced by the majority of organizational members, thereby supporting the achievement of organizational goals.

The findings also indicate that organizational communication has a positive direct effect on lecturer performance, with the relationship dimension providing the greatest contribution among the communication indicators examined. This suggests that better interpersonal relationships within organizational communication lead to higher lecturer performance. Improving organizational communication requires strengthening interdependence between leaders and subordinates, fostering positive relationships among colleagues, and maintaining effective communication that contributes to a supportive working environment. Institutional leaders are expected to provide encouragement, trust, and recognition to lecturers, thereby promoting

cooperation, creating a positive organizational climate, and ultimately improving lecturer performance. Accordingly, establishing strong organizational relationships constitutes the most fundamental approach to enhancing organizational communication within private higher education institutions offering Midwifery Study Programs in North Sumatra.

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