

Human Resource Development Model for Improving Private University Competitiveness

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Abstract

Today, competition among private universities (read private higher education institutions) to attract prospective students has become much tougher. The competition is not only among the private universities themselves but also between them and the public ones. The main cause of this competition is that prospective students are now becoming much more selective in choosing universities. In fact, public universities are the first choice of the prospective students. Consequently, private universities must equip themselves with strong competitiveness. Otherwise, they will lose the competition. One of the strategies to gain the competitiveness is to develop the lecturers. According to research findings, lecturer professionalism is one of the elements that prospective students highly demand. This paper discusses about how to develop university lecturers. The development model suggested in this paper is the one that is based on the concept of AMO performance.

Keywords: Human Resources Development, Lecturer Development Strategies, Private University Competitiveness

Introduction

Over past three years, the number of high school graduates is 2,720,000 on average. This means that universities have big market. Nationwide, the capacity of universities, both public and private ones, is only 1,450,000 or only 53% of the total of school graduates. Entering public (government-owned) universities is the first choice of high school leavers. In fact, the capacity of public universities is only 30% of national capacity. Nowadays, there are only 122 public universities with 6,101 study programs. This indicates that around 70% of the high school graduate (much more than the public university capacity) is the target market of private universities. Today, there are 3,124 private universities with 13,272 study programs.

Surveys reveal that prospective students are very selective in choosing university. They have a number of considerations when deciding to choose a certain university. According to Angraini & Sembiring (2016), quality of human resources is one of the aspects that prospective students consider. Similarly, Simarmata (2014) reveals professionalism of lecturers is one of the factors that contribute to student satisfaction.

Seeing that prospective students are very selective in choosing a campus to study in, a private university must have a very strong competitiveness in order to win the competition. In gaining the competitiveness, one thing that must be taken into serious consideration is qualified human resources. In this context, the human resource is the lecturers. This is in line with research findings saying that prospective students put human resource quality as the main factor in choosing a university. Managerially speaking, human resource is called human capital. This paper discusses about the role of human capital as a strategy of improving competitiveness of private universities.

In every organization, whatever the organization is – profit or nonprofit, human resource is a very significant factor because the ones who operate the organization are the humans themselves. Without human, no organization operates properly and successfully. So, it is a must for every organization to develop its human resources. In the context of universities, human resources comprise of three groups: employees, management, and lecturers. This paper focuses on developing performance of lecturers only.

Competitiveness

Business competition that is getting much tougher today has forced every business organization to have competitiveness. There are two terms used to describe competitiveness. They are strategic competitiveness and competitive advantage. A business organization can have a strategic competitiveness if it manages to formulate its strategy that creates value. This is called value-creating strategy. Meanwhile, a competitive advantage can be reached if the business is able to implement unique strategy – a strategy that cannot be imitated by competitors. Amir (2016) says that competitive advantage is a unique ability of an organization to produce a product or service that will be marketed.

Competitor is any firm that operates the same business in the same market with the same product and target market. For example, Indosat is a competitor to Telkomsel because these two firms offer the same product to the same target market. Similarly, Bung Hatta University is a competitor to Batanghari University. These two universities operate in the same region and the same target market. However, Atma Jaya University in Jakarta can also be a competitor to Bung Hatta or Batanghari although Atma Jaya operates in different region but the same target market. Meanwhile, strategy is integrated and coordinated set of commitments and actions designed to exploit core competencies and to gain competitive advantage (Hitt, et al, 2011).

Today, universities are education business whose core business is higher education with students as the main customers. In other words, the main target market of universities is high school graduate which is large in number nationwide. As a matter of fact, the competition of attracting prospective students is not really tough when it concerns with the total number of high school graduates. However, because the prospective students now tend to be very selective the case becomes different. Every university must make all efforts for promotion so that prospective students are willing to decide. In other words, universities have to use unique strategy. Uniqueness is an attribute that characterizes successful strategy (Pearce & Robinson, 2014). The question now is what kind of unique competitiveness a university must have so that it is likely to win the competition. This question is now very relevant to be asked seeing that all universities offer the same product to the same target market. As already mentioned above, human resource quality is the most demanded by students for their satisfaction. Hence, human resource development is the first priority for every university to develop its competitiveness.

Human Resource Development

Swanson (1995) defines that human resource development (HRD) is the process of developing human expertise through organization development. From this definition, Swanson, furthermore, concludes that HRD has two components. They are 1) personnel training and development, and 2) organizational development. He also concludes that, in its implementation, HRD works in three areas. They are 1) human resource management, 2) career development, and 3) quality improvement.

According to Resource-Based View (RBV), enterprises are the accumulation of various kinds of resources. One of them is human resources (Becker, 1993). RBV views that human resource with their intellectual asset, if well-developed, will improve corporate's competitiveness (Barney, 1993). This concept can be shown as follows:

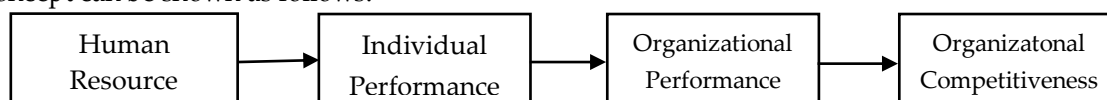


Figure 1 Concept of the connectedness of HRD and Organizational Competitiveness

This framework of thought can be explained like this: human resources, if well-developed, will contribute positively to the performance of every member in the organization. Then, this well-developed performance of the organization member will positively contribute to organizational performance, which in the end, leads to organizational competitiveness.

Work performance is the degree of achievement of organizational goal (Qomariah, 2013). According to Amir (2016), performance is 1) work behavior and output, 2) is related to work behavior

and output, 3) gives meaning to organizations, 4) has dimensions of input, process, output, and outcome. Similarly, Cardoso & Uy (2015) define work performance as people's general attitude about their job. Furthermore, they declare that lack of training and seminar participation may result in low job satisfaction which in turn leads to low work performance. According to Purwihartuti (2017), performance is the efficiency and effectiveness of organization from the financial and nonfinancial points of view.

According to AMO concept, as suggested by Boxall & Purcell (2003), individual performance can be viewed from three dimensions. The three dimensions are ability, motivation, and opportunity. Hence, performance is defined as the function of ability (A), motivation (M), and opportunity (O) simply modeled as $P = f(A \times M \times O)$. According to this concept, people can perform well when they have capabilities, adequate motivation, and work environment that provide them opportunity to participate (Anitha, 2014).

Motivation is any internal and external drive that a lecturer has to have to perform well. Theoretically, motivation has strong influence on work performance. The higher is the motivation, the better is the work performance. In fact, there are several factors that can influence motivation. One of them is needs. According to Maslow, needs are hierarchically arranged. This means that a higher level need will emerge after a lower need is fulfilled. Another factor is expectancy. One thrives to work hard because of the expectation. The more he expects to be successful, the harder he thrives to work.

Opportunity to develop career has a big role in motivation. The bigger is the opportunity, the more highly-motivated a person is to work better. Lecturers have two kinds of career. The first and the main one is academic career. This career comprises of four levels: asisten ahli (junior lecturer), lektor (senior lecturer), lektor kepala (associate professor), and guru besar (professor). This academic career, as a matter of fact, is widely open to every lecturer as long as he or she can meet the requirements. The second kind of lecturer career is managerial one. This career is related to leadership in management area. However, this opportunity is not always open widely to every one. First, because place in management is limited. Second, because acceptability of a person who has an ambition to join management is really required.

Methods

Model of Lecturer Development Strategy

In line with the AMO concept, there are three strategies that can be taken to develop lecturers. The first is competence development strategy. The second is motivation development strategy. And the last is opportunity development strategy. The model of this strategy can be seen in Figure 2.

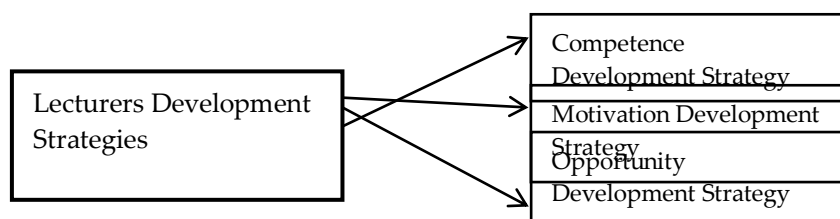


Figure 2 Model of Lecture Development Strategy

Competence Development Strategy

Competence has three dimensions: knowledge, skills, and abilities (Anitha, 2014). Accordingly, Becker & Gerhart (1996) say that competence is knowledge, skills, and attitude that affect one's performance. Meanwhile, Robbins (2006) says ability is an individual capacity for certain work. From these definitions we can conclude that someone's work performance can be described by his or her competence. The higher is the competence, the better is the performance.

According to tridarma concept, a lecturer should have three competences. They are teaching competences, research competences, and public service competences. However, every lecturer should possess only two of them critically: teaching competence and research competence. Concerning with the teaching competence, a lecturer needs to master content knowledge and teaching strategies. These

two components are very critical to teaching component. Researches found out that most students are not satisfied with their lecturers' teaching performance because of these two aspects. This means that lecturers are not quite good at what they want to teach and how to teach it to the students.

Concerning with research ability, there are three aspects that lecturers should have. The first aspect is analysis competence. This area has been mostly criticized. Many of research reports presented on journals do not possess deep analysis of the research findings. Therefore, the quality of the article is in question. The second aspect is scientific writing skills. Writing articles for journals is not easy. Many aspects must be taken into consideration. For example, abstract, according to Kotze (2007), serves as a window display to impress readers. A reader will decide to go on reading the article only if the abstract is really impressive. Unfortunately, many lecturers in their article abstracts include irrelevant information that make readers discontinue reading. This indicates that lecturers still have weakness in writing academic article.

Motivation Development Strategy

According to Gibson, et al (2003), motivation is a drive or energy that makes someone to do something. Similarly, Kartono (2004) says that motivation is a condition that drives someone to reach the goal of an organization. These two definitions indicate that motivation can be intrinsic or extrinsic. Researches have revealed that motivation have a significant effect on work performance. The higher is the motivation the better is the work performance. Trisnaningsi (2011) found that lecturers' performance is significantly explained by their motivation. Now, the question is what motivates people to work better. Aquenza & Som (2012) conclude that some motivational factors that significantly sustain people's stay in organizations are financial rewards, job characteristics, career development, recognition, management, and work-life balance.

Opportunity Development Strategy

Career development is the process that forms one's work identity. It is a significant part of human development and spans of lifetime. For many lecturers, career development is a very important aspect. No one is willing to stay the same all years of his or her working life, nor a lecturer. Researches revealed that career development may contribute to job satisfaction. Meanwhile, competences, motivation, and opportunities significantly affect a person's career.

In relation to lecturer career development, there are several aspects that must be taken into consideration: 1) opportunity to pursue doctoral degree should be given more widely to lecturers, 2) opportunity to join seminars, conferences as presenters or listeners should also be given widely to lecturers, 3) motivation to work better should be improved. These three aspects are very significantly affecting lecturers' career.

Conclusion

Like it or not, universities, especially the private ones, have come to very tough business competition. Therefore, these academic organizations must have competitiveness. The competitiveness of private universities can be indicated by their organizational performances. One of the elements that may improve performance of universities is lecturers' performance. In theory, individual performance contributes to organizational performance. Similarly, lecturers' performance contributes to university performance. So, to gain competitiveness of universities through their performance is to develop the lecturers properly. Lecturers' performances are contributed by their competence, motivation, and career opportunity. So, to develop lecturers, performances should be based on these three aspects.

Based on this conclusion, the author suggests: 1). university administrators should implement human resource strategies (HRS). Lessoro & Muli (2018) explain that by applying HRS, firms can influence individuals to perform better in their work as their skills, abilities, and motivation are effectively boosted. 2). In relation with HRS, HRD to be implemented includes competence development, motivation development, and opportunity development. 3). In terms of competence development, university administrator should design more lecturer-job-related training such as teaching competence training, research competence training, and course-content training. Besides,

lecturers must also be given more opportunities to attend seminars and conferences, and to pursue higher degree, 4). In terms of motivation development, university administrator should reconsider pay and reward system, career development system, and work performance appraisal system. Opportunity development is inherently included in both competence and motivation development strategies. Hence, there is no specific suggestion for this. Discussion of ideas and suggestion on this paper are based on review of various literature. This means that there is no empirical evidence or data presented here as the basis of conclusion. Therefore, the author suggests that further research should be carried out in future to see if these ideas and suggestions empirically proven.

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