

Analyzing Cultural Trust in Higher Education Organization:

A Study at Universitas Negeri Padang (UNP)

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Abstract—The purpose of this research is to analyze how strong the cultural trust embedded among lecturer at Universitas Negeri Padang (UNP). There are 8 (eight) dimensions of cultural trust that are measured in this research, namely trust in ability to do the tasks and to achieve formulated vision; willingness to collaborate, to accept criticism, and to appreciate what have done by others; behavior that shows honest and openness, consistency and credibility, and fairness. This research was a quantitative descriptive study. The population is all lecturers at UNP, totaling 955 people, with a sample of 98 people. The instrument used to collect the data is a questionnaire with a Likert scale model, which has been tested for its validity and reliability. The collected data were analyzed by finding out the level of achievement. The results show that in general cultural trust in UNP community have not yet strongly embedded. Further analysis shown that the lecturers' trust in themselves and their peers is stronger than their trust in their department, faculty, and university leaders.

Keywords— *cultural trust, organization; higher education*

I. INTRODUCTION

This study was conducted based on the preliminary observation in 2016 at Universitas Negeri Padang (UNP) which indicated that there was a lack of cultural trust in its community. This can be seen from several phenomena, in which some lecturers said that they did not believe that the university leaders have the ability to achieve the established vision; they feel they didn't get fair treatment, both in academic terms and in the development of their careers; they found a difficulty to express their opinions or to criticize the university leaders; and they feel that there is a sense of mutual suspicion, and mutually slander between lecturers and staff.

To understand what is cultural trust in organization, it needs to define what is organizational culture and what is trust. From the study of literature, organizational culture, in general, can be defined as a system of values, norms, beliefs

or ideologies, ways of thinking, and expectations that are shared and held firmly by members of the organization, guide the behavior of people in the organization, and become a characteristic of an organization [1], [2], [3], [4], [5], [6]. Trust, on the other hand, can be defined as a situation in which individuals feel confident about something or someone [7], [8], [9], [10], [11], [12], and [13]. This trust can involve the beliefs in oneself or in others, and relate to various dimensions, such as dimensions of ability, willingness, and behavior [13]. This belief arises from relationships or interactions between individuals and other individuals [14], [15], [16], and [17]. This means that someone must give that trust first and or show a trustworthy behavior before he or she gets the trust from others.

From the explanation of organizational culture and trust above, the cultural trust in organization can be defined as a situation in which individuals within the organization believe in themselves and in other people in the organization. These beliefs are shared and held firmly by members of the organization, and become a characteristic of that organization. The shared values of trust in an organization are multidimensional, encompassing cognitive (ability), emotional (willingness), and behavioral dimensions; and also related to various things, both those considered by the organization to be true or may be those that are considered incorrect [18], [13]. As with organizational culture in general, the culture of trust in the organization is very dynamic, in the sense that it can change [12], [1], [19], [6]. Therefore, culture of trust in organization can be measured and be developed. In measuring culture of trust in organization can use an attitude scale developed base on the dimensions of trust in organization.

Culture of trust in organization is very important for organizational progress. A study by Interaction Associates in 2009 found that high-trust organizations had more effective leadership and better collaboration at all levels of the

organization [20]). Organizations that have a high culture of trust will increase organizational productivity [21], because a high culture of trust will make people work safely and comfortably; they will be brave to make their own decisions, make updates, and take risks [22]. In addition, [13] stated that in organizations that have a high culture of trust make employees able to see other employees, especially leaders as credible people, that is, people who can be trusted, who show compatibility between what they said and what they done; they feel valued, which makes employees feel free to make updates in their work and to express their critical opinions in making decisions; and they also feel treated fairly. More specifically, [23] suggested several advantages that can be taken from the existence of a high culture of trust in the organization, namely: (1) the reliability and effectiveness of leadership increases; (2) the sense of security and comfort of employees to express opinions, and the feeling of being treated fairly; (3) employees are inspired to make changes; (4) communication in the organization becomes more open, and the sense of mutual understanding is higher; (5) employee doubts and rejection of updates are lost; (6) the stress felt by employees is reduced; and (7) organizational efficiency and courage to take risks will be increase. On the contrary, the lack of trust, initiate tensions and hostility in the process of interaction, blocking the exchange of information and knowledge, and initiates alienation [24].

From the description above it is clear that the culture of trust in organization is very important for the success of the organization in achieving its vision and mission. Therefore, this study was designed to analyze how strong the culture of trust grows in UNP environment according to lecturers. More specific, there are 8 (eight) questions to be answered in this research, namely: (1) how strong is the lecturers' trust in their own, peers' and leader's ability?; (2) how strong is the lecturers' trust in the ability of department, faculty and university leaders in achieving the established vision?; (3) how strong is the lecturers' trust in the willingness of peers and leaders to accept constructive criticism?; (4) how strong is the lecturers' trust in the willingness of peers and leaders to collaborate harmoniously?; (5) how strong the lecturers' trust in the willingness of peers and leaders to appreciate what lecturers have done?; (6) how strong is the lecturers' trust in the honesty and openness behavior of peers and leaders?; (7) how strong is the lecturers' trust in consistency and credibility of peers and leaders?; and (8) how strong the lecturers' trust in the fair behavior of peers and leaders?

II. RESEARCH METHOD

This study used descriptive quantitative methods. The population of this study was all lecturers in UNP, amounting to 955 people, with sample collection of 98 people (around 10% from the population). In this study, a culture of trust was defined as a condition that grows and develops within the lecturer, where the lecturer feels confident or believes in: the ability of themselves, their colleagues, and the leader in carrying out the duties and responsibilities; the ability of the leaders in achieving the established vision; the willingness of

colleagues and leaders to collaborate harmoniously; the willingness of peers and leaders to accept constructive criticism; the willingness of peers and leaders to appreciate what have lecturers done; the attention, openness, the consistency and credibility behavior of the peers and leaders; and the fair behavior of the peers and leaders.

The data were collected using a questionnaire that has been tested its validity and reliability. This questionnaire was independently developed by the researcher, and used a Likert scale model with five alternative answers in the form of numbers 1 to 5, where number 1 shows the condition of very weak cultural trust; and number 5 shows a very strong cultural trust. The questionnaire consists of 45 items. Data were collected by the researchers on the 2 - 29 October 2016. The collected data were analyzed by finding out the mean score (MS) and the achievement level (LoA). The criteria to interpret the findings are: 90%-100% (Very Strong); 80%-89% (Strong); 66%-79% (Average); 55%-65% (Weak); and ≤54% (Very Weak).

III. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A. Research Findings

As it has been mentioned above that there were 8 questions to be answered in this study concerning cultural trust in organization according to lecturers. The result of the analyzed data can be seen in the Table 1.

Table 1 shows that the average score of the culture of trust in the UNP community is 3.68 with an achievement level of 73.69%. This level of achievement is in the category average. This finding can be interpreted that in general, the lecturers' believe in the ability of themselves, colleagues and leaders; the ability of leaders of departments, faculties, and university in achieving their vision and mission; the willingness of peers and leaders to collaborate harmoniously; the freedom of expression and the willingness of peers and leaders to accept constructive criticism; the willingness of peers and leaders to appreciate what lecturers have done; the attention, openness, and honesty behavior of the leaders; the consistency and credibility behavior of their peers and leaders; and the fair behavior of their peers and leaders are not strongly embedded yet. In other words, according to the lecturers, the culture of trust in UNP environment have not yet develop strongly.

If we look at into each dimension of trust, it seems that there is not much different between one dimension with the others dimension. All of the dimensions are at the average lave of achievement. However, if we look at bit closer into Table 1, it can be seen that there is one dimension was valued highest by lecturers, namely the lecturers' trust in the ability of themselves, peers, and leaders in conducting the tasks (with MS 3.89 and LoA 77.90%); and one dimension is valued lowest, namely the lecturers' trust in the attention, openness, and honesty behavior of their leaders (with MS 3.43 and LoA 68.16%). It means the lecturers do not really belief that the Head of Departments, Deans, and Rector have shown their genuine attention, openness, and honesty in their relationship with the lecturers.

If we look at more closely, the result shown that the lecturers trust their peers stronger than they trust their Head of Department, Dean, or Rector. In every dimension of trust measured concerning their peers, the lecturers shown strong belief in their peers. Closer analyze into each item, it was

found that the lowest mean score and level of achievement was the items concerning the openness of the Rector, Deans, and head of Department. It means that according to lecturers, their Head of Departments, Dean, and Rector were not really open in managing the institution (see Table 1).

TABLE I. CULTURE OF TRUST IN UNIVERSITAS NEGERI PADANG ACCORDING TO THE LECTURERS

No	Dimensions of Lecturers' Cultural Trust in Organization	M	LoA (%)	Category
1.	Trust in their own, peers', and leaders' ability:			
	- Own ability to do the tasks given	4.71	94.29	VS
	- Peers' ability to do the tasks given	4.18	83.67	S
	- The Head of Department's ability to solve students' and lecturers' problems	3.67	73.57	Av
	- The Dean's ability to solve students' and lecturers' problem	3.73	74.69	Av
	- The Dean to solve problems faced by their departments	3.61	72.24	Av
	- The Rector to solve students' and lecturers' problems	3.67	73.47	Av
	Mean Score and LoA	3.89	77.90	Av
2.	Trust in the ability of leaders to achieve the established vision			
	- The Head of Department to achieve vision	3.65	73.06	Av
	- The dean to achieve the established vision	3.76	75.31	Av
	- The Rector to achieve the established vision	3.83	76.94	Av
	Mean Score and LoA	3.75	75.11	Av
3.	Trust in the willingness of peers and leaders to collaborate harmoniously			
	- Harmonious collaboration between colleagues	4.13	82.65	S
	- Harmonious collaboration between lecturers and the Dean	3.69	73.88	Av
	- Harmonious collaboration between leaders in the faculty level	3.56	71.22	Av
	- Harmonious collaboration between leaders at the university level	3.45	68.98	Av
	Mean Score and LoA	3.67	74.44	Av
4.	Trust in the freedom of expression and the willingness of peers and leaders to accept constructive criticism			
	- Freedom of expression	3.62	72.45	Av
	- Peers to accept criticism	4.23	84.69	S
	- The Head of Department to accept criticism	3.79	75.92	Av
	- The Dean to accept criticism	3.52	70.41	Av
	- The Rector to accept criticism	3.43	68.57	Av
	Mean Score and LoA	3.67	73.43	Av
5	Trust in the willingness of peers and leaders to appreciate what lecturers have done			
	- Having appreciation from the peers			
	- Having appreciation from Head of Department	4.02	80.41	S
	- Having appreciation from the Dean	3.43	68.57	Av
	- Having appreciation from the Rector	3.26	65.31	Av
		3.36	67.14	Av
	Mean Score and LoA	3.52	70.35	Av
6.	Trust in the attention, openness, and honesty behavior of the leaders			
	- The attention of the Head of Department	3.68	73.68	Av
	- The attention of the Dean	3.69	73.88	Av
	- The attention of the Rector	3.59	71.84	Av
	- The openness of the Head of Department	3.24	64.60	W
	- The openness of the Dean	2.91	58.16	W
	- The openness of the Rector	2.85	56.94	W
	- The honesty of the Head of Department	3.68	73.67	Av
	- The honesty of the Dean	3.61	72.24	Av
	- The honesty of the Rector	3.41	68.16	Av
	Mean Score and LoA	3.43	68.16	Av
7.	Trust in the consistency and credibility behavior of their peers and leaders:			
	- The consistency and credibility of the peers	4.03	80.61	S
	- The consistency and credibility of the Head of the Department	3.68	73.67	Av
	- The consistency and credibility of the Dean	3.66	73.26	Av
	- The consistency and credibility behavior of the Rector	3.73	74.79	Av
	Mean Score and LoA	3.78	75.61	Av
8.	Trust in the fair behavior of their peers and leaders:			
	- The fairness behavior of the peers	4.14	82.86	S
	- The fairness behavior of the Head of Department	3.69	73.88	Av
	- The fairness behavior of the Dean	3.43	68.57	Av
	- The fairness behavior of the Rectors	3.64	72.86	Av
	Mean Score and LoA	3.73	74.54	Av
	Total Mean and LoA	3.68	73.69	Av

B. Discussion

This study found that in general, according to the lecturers, the trust in the ability of the lecturers, colleagues, and leaders to do the tasks; the ability of leaders of departments, faculties, and university to achieve the UNP vision; the willingness of peers and leaders to collaborate harmoniously; the willingness of leaders to implement freedom of expression and to accept constructive criticism; the willingness of peers and leaders to appreciate what lecturers have done; the attention, openness, and honesty behavior of the leaders; the consistency and credibility behavior of peers and leaders; and the fair behavior of peers and leaders are not yet strongly or firmly embedded in the UNP community. This can be seen from the level of achievement which is still at the average criteria (LoA 73.69). Moreover, from the analysis of each dimension of cultural trust, it was found that there is not much different in the LoA between each dimension. All dimensions are at the average LoA, rank from 68.16% -77.90%.

Since the cultural trust is an important aspect for the effectiveness of an organization, including education organization [9] [25], [26], [27], therefore, bases on the above finding, it is necessary for UNP to built a strong cultural trust in its community. As it has been stated in the UNP 2016 Statute, that the vision of UNP in 2025 is to become one of the best university in South East Asia. To achieve this vision and mission, strong supporting factors are needed such as the existence of a strong culture of trust, which is embedded in the UNP academic community. The culture of trust that need serious attention and need to be developed is the trust of the lecturers towards the leaders of the departments, faculties, and universities. The result shown that in every dimension of trust measured, the lecturers trust in their leaders were weaker than in their peers. There are many study have been found that the effectiveness of an organization, including university was largely determined by the culture of trust that develops within the organization, especially the sense of confidence or trust in the leaders [21], [26]; [14], [28], [29], and [30].

In building a strong organizational culture of trust, leaders of an organization play an important role [9], [12], [1], [19], and [31]. Base on the findings, the dimensions of trust that need serious attention and need to be develop by the leaders in the UNP community are the lecturers' trust in the abilities of the leaders of the departments, faculties, and universities to do their tasks and to achieve the established vision; the willingness of the leaders of departments, faculties, and universities to implement the freedom of expression, to accept criticism, and to give appreciation to the staff; and the behavior of the leaders of departments, faculties, and universities that show their attention and fairness to the staff, honesty and openness in managing the institution, and consistency and credibility.

The lack of a strong cultural trust in UNP community can be caused by several factors. These factors include: (1) the recruitment and the selection system of university leaders is not really appropriate. So far, the system of recruitment and selection can divide lecturers into two groups, namely a group in the leader's side and a group that not in the leader's side. This situation creates an unconducive climate. As it is known that the system of recruitment for the head of departments, faculties, and universities are only candidates from lecturers within the university, and the selection is left to the lecturers to choose the head of department, to the faculty senate members to choose the head of the faculty (dean), and to the university senate members to choose the leader of the university (rector). Such an electoral system is generally more likely to be based on like or dislike; not on the actual abilities of the prospective leaders. Moreover, such a system of selection might also lead to the possibility of bargaining position; (2) there is still a lack of leadership skills in terms of management and leadership. This lack of leadership capacity in managerial and leadership matters can lead to the lack of developing a culture of trust in the work environment, and also to the lack of accuracy of the leaders in implementing his leadership style. As it has been mentioned before, the selection of the head of departments, deans, and rector more likely base on the like or dislike; and there was also no managerial and leadership competences shown in the requirements for prospective department heads, deans, and rector. In other words, the candidates for leaders at university are not people who have skills in higher education managerial and leadership; (3) the impact of two side groups as a result from the election system brings the existence of unhealthy interactions between lecturers and leaders, between leaders and leaders, and between lecturers and lecturers. This situation will make a possibility for arising a mutual distrust. This unhealthy interaction can also be as a result of the inability of the leaders in carrying out their managerial and leadership duties and functions.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion, it can be concluded that in general the culture of trust in UNP community, by mean trust in the ability of themselves, peers, and leaders of departments, faculties, and university in doing the tasks and in achieving UNP vision; in the willingness of peers and leaders to collaborate harmoniously, implementing freedom of expression and accept constructive criticism, and to appreciate what lecturers have done; and in the behavior of peers and leaders to express openness and honesty, consistency and credibility, and fairness are not yet held strongly by the UNP community. However, if we look at more closely into each dimension of cultural trust, this research found that there are some dimensions of cultural trust have been held strongly, and some dimension of cultural trust still week. This research also found that the lecturers' trust in their leaders are weaker than they trust in their peers.

From the several studies have been found that the culture of trust plays an important role in the productivities and effectiveness of an organization, including education organization. Therefore, if UNP would like to achieve its intended goals or vision, the culture of trust in the UNP community need to be developed more strongly, especially the trust of the lecturers in the leaders' ability to do the task properly; leaders' willingness to collaborate, implement freedom of expression and accept constructive criticism, and leaders' behavior to express the openness and honesty, consistency and credibility, and fairness.

The lack of a strong cultural trust in the UNP community can be caused by several factors. One of them is the lack of managerial and leadership abilities or skills of the department heads, deans, and rector. The lack of managerial skills or abilities of the leaders could be as a result from the recruitment and selection system of the university leaders. Therefore, in order to succeed in building a strong cultural trust in UNP, it is recommended that the leaders of UNP to be willing to develop their managerial and leadership skills. It is also recommended for the Ministry of Research Technology and Higher Education to rethinking the system of recruitment and selection of the university leaders.

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