A Conceptual Framework of Academic Well-Being

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Abstrak

Perubahan organisasi di perguruan tinggi negeri maupun swasta telah mengusik kesejahteraan akademisi, terutama akibat kurangnya perhatian dan dukungan dari para pimpinan perguruan tinggi untuk meringankan dampak dari perubahan itu sendiri. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk membangun kerangka konseptual kesejahteraan akademik di Sekolah Tinggi Agama Buddha di Indonesia. Hasil kualitatif menunjukkan bahwa stres dan konflik sebagai konsekuensi signifikan dari perubahan organisasi; dengan dampak buruk lainnya termasuk berkurangnya kebebasan akademik, kehidupan keluarga, kesehatan, dan prospek karir yang terganggu. Akibatnya, penurunan kepuasan kerja dan kesejahteraan akademis telah terjadi. Namun dampak tersebut hanya bersifat sementara. Selain itu, gagasan mengenai marginalisasi yang semakin berkurang menunjukkan bahwa para akademisi menolak perubahan pada awalnya; namun kemudian percaya bahwa perubahan tersebut akan menciptakan keadaan yang lebih baik pada periode tertentu. Kerangka konseptualnya adalah untuk membantu membangun konsep kesejahteraan akademik bagi para dosen di Sekolah Tinggi Agama Buddha – Indonesia.

Kata Kunci: perubahan organisasi, kesejahteraan akademisi, konflik, kepuasan akademisi

Abstract

The organisational transformation in higher education institutions has troubled academics well-being, mostly where there is insufficient care and support from leaders to simplify the change. The study aims to establish the conceptual framework of academic well-being in Buddhist Colleges in Indonesia. Qualitative results designate that stress and conflict as significant consequences of organizational change; with other adverse effects including reduced academic freedom, family life, health, and distracted career prospects. As a result, reduction in academic satisfaction and well-being has occured. However, these contrary consequences were happened in a short term only. In addition, the idea of diminishing marginal suggests that academics resisted to change firstly but then believed the changes will create a better circumstance at a certain period. The conceptual framework is to help building academic well-being concepts in Buddhist College in Indonesia.

Keywords: organizational change, academic well-being, conflict, academic satisfaction

Introduction

The changes in tertiary institutions have influenced how Human Resources Management (HRM) practices manage the employees, especially academics. Lecturers play beneficial figures in higher education institutions. They must cove the impacts of the changes. Unexpected change has occurred during the pandemic in 2019 in operational activities. There are two impacts of change to academics' regular activities; direct and indirect effects. Direct impacts are changes in working systems and shifts in organizational directions; however, the

indirect impacts may affect psychologically to employees.

The concept of well-being has been researched over the years; however, all agree that within positive psychological well-being may not be viewed only as the absence of illness but also it is viewed as the absence of psychological strain and includes measures of personal growth and related indices of optimal functioning (Meyer & Maltin, 2010, p.324). Lecturers may need to free from sickness and feel happy and comfortable.

The interactions of academics (lecturers), leaders, students, and other external stakeholders in HEIs are complicated as all of them tend to come from a range of backgrounds (Skelton, 2012; Sotirofski, 2014). In addition, academic administration and academic performance evaluation are also multifaceted; there is a possibility of misconception between academic and non-academic staff. The communication would be conflict during the process of the organizational change. The interaction between academics and students occurs during the learning process in classrooms, consultation, and through the supervisory process. The method of academic connection includes how lecturers handle and treat students (Skelton, 2012). Academic behavior may, therefore, influence a student's academic achievement. In the same way, academic conduct may affect leadership behavior.

Method

The present study uses a sequential exploratory mixed method design, and it is scientifically and systematically conducted with the data collection in two phases. However, in this article, the presentation is mere the framework of academic well-being that is focusing on academic psychological well-being (PWB).
The research process started with qualitative data collection through focus group discussions and in-depth interviews found at selected Indonesian universities. The collected data indicated that organisational change within the selected universities created conflict, stress, pressures, and reduced the health and well-being of academics.

Buddhist Colleges, or in Indonesian words, as *"Sekolah Tinggi Agama Buddha (STAB)"* has been developing during years. There are twelve STABs in Indonesia. Public Buddhist Colleges are Sriwijaya and Raden Wijaya; while private Buddhist Colleges are Nalanda, Dharma Widya, Smaratungga, Syailendra, Maitreyawira, Maha Prajna, Dutavira, Kertarajasa, Jinarakkhita, and Bodhi Dharma.

The study is of a limited number of Buddhist College and a limited sample respondents in Indonesia. Participants numbered 114 for the research. There were 30 respondents from three higher education institutions (Buddhist Colleges) for preliminary research (focus groups and interviews), and 114 respondents from 5 Buddhist College (STAB Nalanda, STABN Sriwijaya, STABN Raden Wijaya, STAB Dharma Widya, STAB Maha Prajna). This study is limited to take place at one point in time (a cross-sectional study). The research conducted from April 2023 to November 2023.

Organisational change in HEIs has influenced academic and non-academic staffs and even managers. However, the respondents targeted in the study are academics staff and managers such as heads of schools and departments. Non-academics staffs such as administrative and technical supporting employees are not included in the study.

The measurement model specification and structural model were accepted. The analysis used PLS-SEM (SmartPLS 4 software) which is aiming to examine the internal consistency reliability, discriminant validity, and convergent validity. The criterion for

internal consistency reliability is Cronbach's alpha. The minimum of Cronbach's alpha is 0.60 or 0.70; however, for PLS-SEM the composite reliability is preferable. Convergent validity was used for the average variance extracted (AVE); all the constructs were minimum 0.50 as the criterion. Discriminant validity in the measurement model was cross-loadings and Fornell-Larcker. Both of discriminant validity was confirmed.

Results and Discussion

The first stage of transformation may increase the quality of teaching and competency of academics, and develop the university image and brand. The change may add to the number of student enrolments. In addition, changes in HEIs result in distress among academics. Organizational change harms teaching quality and research output; also, managers must consider the impact of change on job satisfaction and employee well-being, particularly in light of the increased levels of stress and conflict that arise during transition periods (Oreg, 2003).

Academics are at the core of service delivery for higher education institutions, meaning that if the change affects their well-being, this may harm the quality of service delivered (The, 2019). The conceptual framework of the study is built in three steps: characteristics of the workplace, factors of well-being, and the concept of well-being.

Characteristics of the Workplace

The workplace where people connect, interact and collaborate needs stable and calm circumstances; hence, the employees will work productively and perform. Leadership support, including leadership style, skill, and care, provided to subordinates and organizational operations plays a critical role in the change in tertiary institutions; leadership must guide and instruct lecturers to implement new systems or regulations.

Characteristics of the changing working environment are to create a communicative interaction among staff, heads of schools, deans, vice-rectors, and rector. The next steps are factors determining the impact of organisational change on academics. The last step represents the well-being of academics; incorporating both subjective well-being (SWB) and psychological well-being (PWB).

Lecturers are one of the key factors in the educational environment who play a role in conveying knowledge and guiding students. The psychological well-being (PWB) of lecturers is an important factor that can influence the quality of research, teaching, and interactions with colleagues and students. The interactions among academics form the social habits and culture.

Organizational communication in the educational environment plays an important role in shaping lecturers' perceptions and experiences of their work environment. Research by Lee et al. (2021) shows that effective organizational communication can increase job satisfaction and psychological well-being of lecturers.

Lecturers often face challenges in organizational communication, including unclear information, lack of participation in decision making, and conflicts between personal goals and organizational goals. According to research by Garcia et al. (2018), organizational communication uncertainty can cause stress and job dissatisfaction in lecturers.

The stress experienced by lecturers can have a negative impact on their psychological well-being. According to a study by Chen and Wang (2019), high levels of stress among lecturers are associated with decreased motivation, emotional exhaustion, and the risk of burnout.

The relationship between organizational communication and faculty stress has been the focus of significant research. Johnson et al. (2022) found that poor organizational communication, such as lack of feedback and ineffective communication, can increase stress levels and reduce lecturers' psychological well-being.

Identifying the determinants of effective organizational communication is important in efforts to improve the psychological well-being of lecturers. According to research by Smith and Peterson (2021), transparency, trust, and active participation are key elements in organizational communication that support lecturers' psychological well-being.

The role of leadership in creating a communication environment that supports lecturers' psychological well-being cannot be ignored. Lee et al. (2020) emphasizes the importance of leadership that pays attention to lecturers' psychological needs, listens to input, and provides constructive feedback.

Educational policies can also influence organizational communication and the psychological well-being of lecturers. Jones and Brown (2019) note that policies that support the development of good organizational communication and provide adequate resources can help reduce stress and improve faculty psychological well-being.

Understanding the link between organizational communication and the psychological well-being of lecturers has important implications for managing human resources in educational institutions. Future challenges involve developing more effective organizational communication strategies as well as increasing awareness of the importance of lecturers' psychological well-being in creating a productive and sustainable educational environment.

The importance of academic well-being in higher education is influencing the well-being of the students. Current circumstances Higher Education Institutions (HEI's) leaders and management signify the academia's well-being besides the academic outcomes achieved (Eloff et al., 2021; Finley, 2016). Some experts argue that well-being, which is called, happiness, is an important outcome for education (Eloff et al., 2021; Finley, 2016; The, 2019). The world of academic conditions requires a decent place, where students and lecturers would work and collaborate in research and grants.

The characteristics of a workplace and determinants of well-being have been investigated to establish the conceptual framework of academic well-being in Higher Education Institutions (The, 2019). The extensive literature review which informs the qualitative study of employee well-being may connect working environment, communication among lecturers, job 'satisfaction, and well-being. Lecturers' interaction with their students may influence students' well-being as well (Eloff et al., 2021). Workplace and leadership competency may support employee well-being. The framework of academic well-being discusses well-being determinants such as stress, conflict, job satisfaction, and psychological well-being (PWB).

Transformation may bring a burden to lecturers and students; it similarly creates conflict, stress, and inconvenience circumstances. Leaders, academics, and students found more distractions and stress during online teaching (Idris et al., 2021). The activity in the organisation becomes more challenging and unpredictable (Naeem, 2016; Cunha, 2010). The organisational culture is affected by the changing working atmosphere. Psychologically, academics and leaders find themselves inconvenienced by the change;

and they see that their well-being level is deteriorating.

Leaders must provide an encouraging environment for all academics during the process of change. Hence, the academics would find a convenient workplace during the sudden change. Such circumstances would enhance academics' contribution and willingness to increase the organisation's performance. Academics find that disruptions and higher workloads impact the family life and self (Idris et al., 2021).

The qualitative study investigated the impacts of organizational change on the working environment by application of NVivo 14; while quantitative analysis adopted PLS-SEM technique to discover and answer the research objectives. This exploratory study has supported the initial findings of focus groups and interviews.

There are three outcomes of the preliminary study: how organisational change has impacted lecturers' conflict and stress; corporate issues affected academics' family life, health, satisfaction, and well-being; and the resistance to change is a temporary effect. Those findings are elaborated in separated qualitative data analysis article. The outcomes become the foundation of questionnaire development for addressing main themes in quantitative data collection.

The first preliminary finding is related to individual conflict among lecturers and operative positions such as heads of schools, academic administrative staffs, and performance evaluation staffs. Generally, personal conflict has been common between academics and leaders of schools. However, disputes and stress were not reported to the top management. Academics treated conflict and anxiety as their routine activities. "Sungkan" culture or "power distance" of Indonesian culture is firm in Buddhist Colleges. They put respects too high to their leaders; so that top management might hear the issues after the problems getting worse. Academics felt "sungkan" (hesitate) when they must talk to their leaders. During the change execution, the academics avoided having a meeting with the head of school and other managers or directors in solving their problems.

Academics were reluctant to engage with or complain to management. They kept problems among themselves and became apathetic and disengaged. According to Gelfand et al. (2017), problem-focused solving is more effective, particularly in the high level of power distance contexts. The academics may have a chance to suggest their ideas and feedback for the jobs. Leaders expect the subordinate to obey and accept the directions during the change process. Thus, they possibly will influence managerial decision making and leadership styles (Cole, Carter, & Zhang, 2013).

Additionally, conflict and stress affected to academic's family life and health. Avoidance conflict is the best solution for any situation; however, conflict could not be avoided. The matter is humans interacting with others in their relationships; to facilitate the conflict possibility could be rising. Academics or workers who are facing conflict and stress have a health problem reference such as somatic symptoms; dizziness, cardiovascular, gastrointestinal, sensorimotor complaints, fatigue, and exhaustion (Li et al., 2016). Indirectly, the distress in the workplace might be influencing the family life. The demands of the jobs and high working loads have resulted in the burdens of the lecturers. Marking tests, giving feedbacks of the students' assignments and theses, preparing the teaching modules, and supervising higher degree students.

The third finding is that academics who resisted change eventually returned to normal behavior. This academic behavior is "a diminishing marginal value" from the development of neoclassical theory (J. Horowitz, List, & McConnell, 2007; J. K. Horowitz, List, & McConnell, 2004). Here, the more academics resist change, at the one certain point they stop resisting the change and accept its inevitability. Therefore, reform becomes routine and predictable

conditions in organizational life (Bechky, 2006; Thomas, Sargent, & Hardy, 2011). Another theory of organizational change is 'Hawthorne effect' by Elton Mayo (Dale & Willey, 1984; McCambridge, Witton, & Elbourne, 2014). The productivity of workers would be high when the team leaders presented in the place. The theory affirmed that workers would behave and produce better to adjust the organizational change in the working environment. However, when the stimulus is removed, the productivity is eventually dropped back (M. Oxenburgh, P. Marlow, & A. Oxenburgh, 2004, p. 106).

Moreover, there are three other theories associated with an academic behavior; Affective Events Theory (AET) by (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996), Adaptation Level Theory by (Helson, 1947), and organisational citizenship behaviour by Organ (Malik & Naeem, 2016). AET explains the relationship between employees and their emotional reactions to events happened at work is momentary (Luo & Chea, 2018). Adaptation theory states that even though humans have positive and negative experiences that may increase and decrease their instantaneous well-being; they will return to their baseline level of well-being at certain point following the events (Ritter, Matthews, Ford, & Henderson, 2016, p. 1657). Organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) is a voluntary behaviour of employees to adjust their attitudes and willingness to implement the change. This worker's behaviour is as the expectation of the institutions.

Quantitative findings of the current study are supported by the preliminary conclusions, and also there are other findings related to impacts of organizational change to the working environment of tertiary institutions. Quantitative analysis adopted PLS-SEM considering that small size of data and non-normal data. The measurement and structural model were implemented in the process of examining the reliability and validity of data and testing the hypothesis with bootstrapping. The change has

impacted on the communicative working environment and leadership support. There was conflict, stress, job satisfaction, and organisational virtuousness. Those circumstances reduce significantly subjective well-being (SWB) and psychological well-being (PWB).

The survey findings indicate that the organisational changes in the selected Indonesian universities studied had a negative impact on staff well-being, especially through the generation of conflict and stress in the workplace. The broad findings of the research are in accordance with the research findings of (OECD, 2013; Ryff, 1989) and suggest that universities can improve their change management processes through more effective communication and more extensive engagement with staff in line with the research findings of (Ayoko & Callan, 2010; Ayoko & Pekerti, 2008; Jiménez, Winkler, & Dunkl, 2017; Raziq & Maulabakhsh, 2015; Rego, Ribeiro, Cunha, & Jesuino, 2011; Spagnoli, Caetano, & Santos, 2012).

Conclusion

There are three potential contributions. First, there is the study of the relationship between the work environment and communication and leadership. In this study, the working environment construct is combined with communication construct, because in the working environment, the role of communication is essential for influencing the workplace. Previous studies of the leadership and working environment relationship suggest that leadership is vital to supporting the working environment (Gregersen, Vincent-Höper, & Nienhaus, 2014).

There is indicated that little research has systematically investigated the reverse proposition that the working environment has an impact on the leadership. This study presents the relationships of the working environment and communication

(communicative working environment) in the changing tertiary institutions which influence the leadership role and behaviours (leadership support).

Second, changes in the university sector are influencing academic well-being. Characteristics of the workplace in the study are "communicative working environment", leadership support, conflict and organisational virtuousness. The determinants of educational well-being are socioeconomic factors, job satisfaction, and stress (see Figure 1 below the article). These determinants construct subjective well-being (SWB) and psychological well-being (PWB) as academic well-being. Furthermore, the findings of preliminary study and theoretical review create the conceptual model for examining well-being. The current study offers an operational and conceptual model of academic well-being in the next chapter.

Third, HEIs need to provide a conducive working environment to support staff and student achievements. To create employee well-being, tertiary institutions and educational leaders need to deliver a good working environment. The importance of communicative workplace during the change will encourage faculty members and students in the highest aspirations and appreciation. Academics behaviour and attitudes follow the leaders' actions. As a result, the change will not disrupt the transferring and sharing knowledge to the students. The good condition at the university will improve better teaching and learning process, academic commitment, student engagement and performance. Organisational productivity will increase with the appropriate academic attitude and behaviours as resulted from the highest well-being. Hence, the next organisational change may not affect the educational process in the HEI and reduce the employee resistance.

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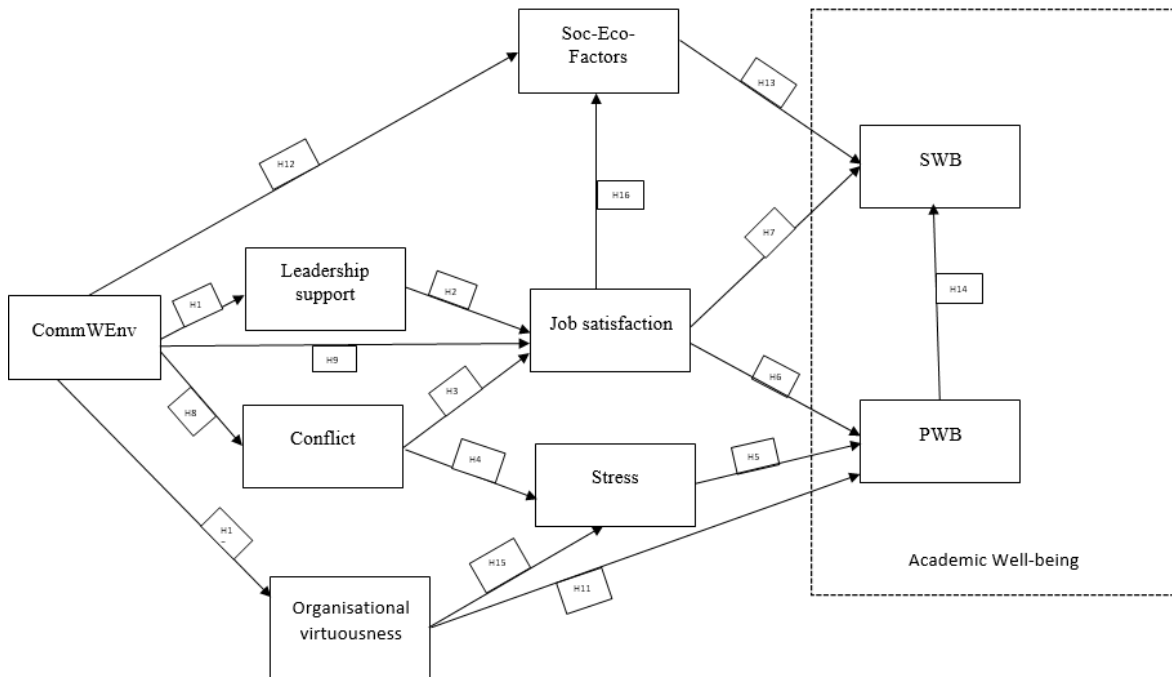[8] Garcia, R., et al. (2018). Challenges of organizational communication in educational institutions. *Journal of*

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Profil Penulis

Profil singkat berupa narasi data kelahiran; pendidikan dari jenjang sarjana sampai pendidikan terakhir yang berisi prodi, dan tahun kelulusan serta pekerjaan/aktivitas yang dilakukan sampai saat ini.

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Source: Lianah The, 2019