

MAKING SENSE OF FEMALE STUDENTS FOR LEADERSHIP AT STAIN KUDUS: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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ABSTRAK

Artikel ini membahas konsep, peluang, dan tantangan kepemimpinan mahasiswa perempuan di STEC (STAIN English Club), STAIN Kudus. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif. Untuk mengumpulkan data, penulis melakukan wawancara mendalam (in-depth interview) dan observasi. Informan yang diwawancarai antara lain kepala STEC, tim dan anggota STEC. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa kepemimpinan perempuan di STEC belum berjalan dengan maksimal. Selain itu, muncul stereotip atau penilaian negatif yang disematkan pada pemimpin wanita. Oleh karena itu, hal ini menjadi tantangan bagi pemimpin perempuan di STEC. Untuk mengoptimalkan kualitas dan kinerja kepemimpinan, mempersiapkan pemimpin yang berkualitas sangat penting untuk memperbaiki kepemimpinan di STEC. Hal ini bisa ditempuh melalui pengembangan kesadaran diri di antara pemimpin, tim dan anggota STEC, menciptakan visi yang jelas tentang penyelenggaraan STEC masa depan, mengembangkan sasaran strategis dan program inovatif, mengembangkan kerjasama dan jaringan dengan institusi lain.

Kata Kunci: Mahasiswa; Kepemimpinan; STEC

ABSTRACT

This paper explores the concepts, opportunities and challenges of female students leadership in STEC (STAIN English Club), STAIN Kudus. A qualitative study is conducted in this study. In order to gather data, in-depth interview and observation are conducted. The participants of interview are the head of STEC, the team and the members of STEC. The finding shows that the female leadership in STEC has not run well. Besides, there is a stereotype of negative judgment embedded to female leader. Therefore, this becomes a challenge for a female leader of STEC. In order to optimize the quality and performance leadership, the need of preparing qualified leaders is considerably crucial to improve STEC development. These include developing self-awareness among the leaders, the team and the members of STEC, creating a clear vision of the organization of STEC for future, developing strategic goals and innovative programs, developing cooperation and networking with other institutions.

Keyword: Female Students; Leadership; STEC

INTRODUCTION

The issues of women leadership have become interesting to discuss. It has already been known that between men and women have obviously certain styles in leadership. These differences in age and gender, indeed affect the leadership behavior

of the individuals as well (Kotur & Anbazhagan, 2014). In accordance with it, these differences could be seen from the styles of leadership between men and women, the way how they treat the team, and the way of managing their time. Women principals are more likely to interact with their staff and spend more time in the classroom or with teachers discussing the academic and curricular areas of instruction. Women principals are more likely to influence teachers to use more desirable teaching methods (Montgomery, n.d.). In line with Walsh, men and women have the equity to be a leader as long as they have capabilities, better skills and qualities. The real issue in leadership differences lies in the equity in selecting the right person with the appropriate skills and qualities to ensure the effectiveness and success of the organization (Barker, 2000; Bass and Avolio, 1994, cited in Trinidad & Normore (2000)).

Regarding this, it could be assumed that there is an opportunity for women in term of leadership for organizations although they have different styles in their leadership. It is in accordance with Trinidad & Normore (2000) advocating that the integration of women in leadership roles is not a matter of “fitting in” the traditional models, but “giving in” the opportunities for them to practice their own leadership styles.

Tremendous studies related to gender leadership issues were previously conducted by some researchers. There could be differences in leadership styles between men and women (Jonsen, Maznevski, & Schneider, 2010; Kent, Blair, Rudd, & Schuele, 2006; Montgomery, n.d.). Focusing on the gender leadership styles, Jonsen, Maznevski, & Schneider (2010) assert that by using three paradigms including the gender-blind view: women and men leaders are not significantly different and should therefore be treated the same, the gender-conscious view: women and men leaders are significantly different and should be treated accordingly, and perception creates reality: women and men leaders are not significantly different, but people believe they are different (stereotyping) and these stereotypes create barriers, the findings are in principle applicable to all levels of managers including supervisors.

More clearly, Kent, Blair, Rudd, & Schuele (2006) found that women raters were more critical of both men and women leaders on the single factor of

Communicating for Meaning. In addition, women raters were more critical of female leaders than they were of male leaders. Different from the above previous researchers, Montgomery (n.d.) simply describes the phenomena that women who seek leadership positions face barriers and many times give up because they become overwhelmed in dealing with obvious barriers.

Likewise, there has been organizations lead by the women students at STAIN Kudus. STEC (STAIN English Club) for instance, is lead by the female student. Besides, the majority of active participants in students' organization are dominated by the women ones. Therefore, it could be deduced that women students have opportunity and right to lead the organizations as well as men. In addition, other student's organization such as RACANA (Scouting), KOPMA (student's cooperation) are surely dominated by female students. Referring to these facts, the needs for building capable and trustworthy leaders are seriously taken into consideration particularly students organization, STEC (STAIN English Club) at STAIN Kudus. As has been highlighted by Walsh (2017) emphasizing that to be trustworthy leaders, then, we need to make a serious commitment to a network of partnerships – including with our students -- that are honest and effective, solid and sophisticated and above all remain capable of receiving candid critique. Regarding this, preparing leadership assets with better missions and visions among students at STAIN Kudus in particular women students becomes a major part of teachers' tasks.

In this matter, teachers should earn the students' trust in order that their students are being professional leaders. In order to propose some recommendations to the leader particularly female students with regard to improving their skills and ability as leaders, this paper mainly will firstly outline a part of literature concerning gender and leadership and women leadership styles. In addition, the need for preparing female students in leading student's organization particularly STEC (STAIN English Club) at STAIN Kudus as well as opportunities and challenges in a leadership is in detail discussed.

The term of leadership and gender is closely related to each other where men and women have a chance to lead an organization. Robbins & Judge (2012) define leadership as the ability to influence a group toward the achievement of a vision or set of goals. In this matter, they emphasize that not all leaders are managers, nor, for

that matter, are all manager's leaders. In other words, the task of manager is automatically able to manage a group of people in the organization. Leadership style is by definition leadership behavior with two clearly independent dimensions: the task dimension that includes goal setting, organization, direction, and control; and the relationship dimension involving support, communication, interaction, and active listening (Hersey and Blanchard, 1988) cited in (Trinidad & Normore, 2000). One aspect of leadership that is focused on in the general leadership literature is the unique set of skills that are necessary for successful leadership to take place within a university context – context in this case being everything (Murphy & Curtis, 2013).

Referring to it, it needs to take into consideration that in order to be able to a successful leader, people should be equipped by a set of skills as well as the ability to manage the organization. Consequently, the better improvement and training for leadership are becoming something urgent to allege a lack of poor leadership. It is strengthened by Sotarauta, M., Beer, A., & Gibney, J. (2017) exploring that there is now an urgent need to understand more in depth what place leadership is actually about in the contemporary sub-national development settings so as to provide policy makers and practitioners not only with better evidence-based guidance on what to do but also some guidance informed by good evidence on how to go about doing it, how to develop the abilities and capacities required for leading in both formal and informal complex networks.

In accordance with women leadership, it is still found that there has been a phenomenon that some women may not be aware of gender issues. Besides, we still find that younger women having assumptions that there is no need for action regarding the strong leadership in a society. As has been highlighted by Archard (2013) that there is a new dilemma with regard to overcoming a younger generation of women's acceptance of social inequity and leadership programs that develop adolescent girl's understanding of these concepts might be beneficial in addressing this concern. From his statement, it could be deduced that organizing adolescent leadership for women development and the implications on future leadership understanding are considerably meaningful in resulting the maximal ways to prepare these women for taking a chance of leadership roles.

Men and women have different styles in leadership position in some ways.

Since men and women have different leadership styles, the variances do not mean that one has dominance over the other (Montgomery, n.d.). Women embrace relationships, sharing, and process, but men focus on completing tasks, achieving goals, hoarding of information, and winning (Chliwniak, 1997) cited in (Montgomery, n.d.). Women who work in the political sector giving more dominant attention on social and welfare aspects, protection, environment, disarmament weapons, equality policies, education and health. The most dominant influence of women's policies is in political protection gradually aimed at the responsibility of the state to provide opportunity for women combined maternal obligations (motherhood) with the rights to independence economy. While men are more interested in the sectors of economy, transportation, energy issues, national security, industry and abroad (Sofia, 2014).

Regarding this, it could be assumed that women tend to focus more on instructional matters and concerns more on helping their team or members while men tend to concern on organizational ones. Besides, the ways of female leadership styles are not better or worse than the male leadership styles. Fortunately, the “baggage” women leaders bring is gaining more visibility and attracting more attention as the female presence in leadership positions increases (Trinidad & Normore, 2000).

Referring to this, the styles and behaviors of female leaders could also be noticed through the certain factors influencing them. This is strengthened by Trinidad & Normore (2000) asserting that the baggage is the result of three basic influential factors that shape behaviors of women and men throughout their personal and professional lives: (1) socialization; (2) culture of origin; and (3) organizational culture. From this description, it could be deduced that such factors mentioned above are respectfully giving more influence on both men and women especially their personality and professional activities in leadership.

In line with the leadership behavior, Robbins & Judge (2012) explain that the studies narrowed the list to two that substantially accounted for most of the leadership behavior described by employees involve initiating structure and consideration. Initiating structure is the extent to which a leader is likely to define and structure his or her role and those of employees in the search for goal attainment. Meanwhile, consideration is the extent to which a person's job relationships are

characterized by mutual trust, respect for employees' ideas, and regard for their feelings (Robbins & Judge, 2012). Referring to it, a leader both men and women should have better leadership behaviors such as organizing work, building up relationship with their team, and achieving the goals. Besides, the leader should be able to help their team, treat all members as equals, support and appreciate the team work.

METHODS

This article belongs to a descriptive qualitative paradigm. In order to gather data, the writer interviews the chief and the committee of STEC (STAIN English Club) at STAIN Kudus and observes the condition and activities of STEC. By conducting interview and observation, the writer is able to dig up the information about the leadership styles, conditions of STEC (STAIN English Club) lead by a female student, and the primarily barriers during STEC leadership. Having these data, the writer analyzes and discusses them further.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Conditions and Programs of STEC (STAIN English Club)

STEC (STAIN English Club) is a student's organization built in 14 February 1998. The purpose of this organization was to provide English training and tutorials for students whose background is not English Department. Since 2015, STEC was lead by the female students. Therefore, it is apparently assumed that women have leadership opportunities as well as men. There are a number of leadership structures in STEC. These encompass the Head of STEC, Consultants, Manager, Manager Assistant, Secretary, treasurer, Education Department, Skill Department, Art Department, Equipment Department, and Public Relation Department. Up to the present time, the number of members in STEC is 38 consisting of 14 men and 24 women. In addition, the organization structures are dominantly lead by the female students. In as much as the English skills of the members of STEC were categorized as a novice learner, the programs of STEC include weekend tutorials, TOT (Training Of Trainer), TBF (Training By Functionary), NEMA (New Members), and SG (Stadium General). Compared to the previous leaderships, the present leadership tends to develop more activities and design a number of organization structures

having roles and responsibilities in STEC. As has been highlighted by Hanifah, the head of STEC:

“As the times go, the need of creativity and innovation in STEC programs is inevitably urgent to attract the students’ interest. For this reason, my team and I gather to design a number of organization structures having responsibilities to develop the programs of STEC. In this matter, the department of Art is crucial for providing ideas, arts and literature for the students at STAIN Kudus. In fact, this department has roles for training the students such as “Kretek” Dance, theatre, drama, tourism member, etc. Amazingly, one of the administrators of STEC, Abdullah Faqih, won the competition of Kudus Tourism. This becomes an achievement” (Hanifah, 17 November 2017).

Opportunities and Roles of Female Students Leadership

Reviewing the leadership phenomena and structures within the educational context, female student’s leadership development could be developed in some ways. In this case, there have been opportunities for women leadership that are considerably crucial to female students at STAIN Kudus particularly in STEC (STAIN English Club). With regard to this, in the process of leadership election, both male and female students are basically provided a wide range of leadership skills through certain trainings of leadership such as public speaking and presentation. This is in line with Archard(2013, p. 166) exploring that it was also recommended by staff that a wider range of opportunities for students to practice leadership, and as a consequence develop leadership skills, was required. This included the greater utilization of leadership training through specific programs that focused on skill development.

The training of interpersonal skills for students is necessary for influencing others. Further, other concepts of leadership encompassing various styles of leadership are important to be fostered for students. In conjunction with the leadership development, female students have a chance for leading STEC (STAIN English Club) at STAIN Kudus. These include the position of the head of STEC as well as the consultants having responsibilities to manage the team and members of STEC to achieve the goals successfully. Besides, other departments of STEC run the tasks based on the regulations and guide from the head. The skill department, for instance, is responsible for providing programs and trainings related to skill

development for the members of STEC encompassing English Debate, English Speech, etc. The art department is responsible for providing ideas, activities, training, programs related to art including dancing, theatre, tourism, drama and performance. Further, the educational department is responsible for programs related to education such as tutorial weekend, training of trainer, training by functionary, stadium general and new member meeting between the administrator and the members of STEC. In addition, the department of public relation has responsibilities for connecting the activities of STEC to others outside. The above structures organizations are mostly lead by the female students of STAIN Kudus. Consequently, this proved that women have leadership opportunities as well as men.

Other activities indicating that female students have roles in STEC are the participation and various initiations done by cooperating with other institutions such as Islamic Boarding School “Darul Muqoddas” located in Kudus in which there are numerous students of elementary school and Junior high school. In that boarding school, leader and members of STEC teach English each month by training the students how to greet people, how to converse in daily activities, and so on. This proved that the existence of STEC is appreciated by others. This is in line with Hidayah (2017), positioning the department of public relation:

“As the leader of public relation department, I have responsibility to connect STEC with others such as schools, Universities, social agents, etc. By cooperating with such institutions, we can get more knowledge, share ideas and experience with others and participate to meaningful events such as the English festival, English Debate and speech contest”(Hidayah, 1 November 2017).

Leadership Barriers for Women Leaders in STEC (STAIN English Club)

Positioning the organization leadership, people certainly will face some barriers in achieving the goals. Along with STEC, a female leader finds a number of barriers regarding the responsibilities and duties as well as with her team. One of the barriers is the assumption of negative judgments for women leaders such as inconsistency in taking decisions and incapability of running the tasks. For women in management, this may result in the internalization of the idea that women are less capable of assuming leadership roles. As such, they do not identify themselves with potential leadership positions, considered male territory, thus undermining their motivation

and potentially leading to lower performance (Jonsen et. Al., 2010). The problem of this under-representation is primarily due to stereotypes attached to women, more specifically, their lack of capacity to hold leadership positions (Young and Kochan, 2004) cited in (Trinidad & Normore, 2000).

Other barriers faced by the leader of STEC include the different perceptions and ideas of the team and members of STEC, miscommunications in running the responsibilities among the team and members of STEC, instability of spirit among the team and members, the lack of appreciation and support from the campus (STAIN), the lack of holding interesting and challenging events such as inviting native speakers to attract the members' motivation in joining STEC, and so on. As has been stated by Hanifah (2017) positioning the head of STEC:

“I like leading STEC and having the team. However, I find problems running the tasks and managing team due to several factors. These factor encompass the business among the members of EDC, the lack of interest and spirit among the team to work better, miscommunication and different perceptions. Further, there is a stereotype that I'm not capable of leading STEC, and so on. Other barriers include a lack of support from the institution (STAIN) Kudus and a lack of a solid team”. (Hanifah, 1 November 2017).

Those barriers in STEC are also highlighted by Adelina (2017) positioning the consultant of STEC:

“I think STEC now has improvements compared to several years ago. Nonetheless, the head of STEC and the team find complexity of leading this organization. For example, the leader is so busy with her campus activities. Last month, she was absent for STEC because she had to join the practice of teaching at school, participate in the process of accreditation of study programs, etc. Therefore, I had to handle and manage STEC. Besides, the primary barrier is the lack of self-awareness between the team and the members of STEC, a lack of motivation and the participation of lecturers at STAIN Kudus and a lack of innovation and courage from the head of STEC” (Adelina, 1 November 2017).

In conjunction with the lack of interest and spirit among the team and the members of STEC, Eggy (2017) as the member of STEC advocates that the programs of STEC are less innovative and interesting:

“In my opinion, the programs held by STEC are less interesting. Therefore, the members are not too interested in joining that. Tutorial and training, for instance, are mostly guided by the head of STEC and the team. English lecturers are rarely giving trainings as well as motivations to members of

STEC. Further, STEC rarely invite the native speakers to arouse students' motivation in joining STEC. Consequently, I think, the leader and the team of STEC should build innovations and strategic goals in STEC" (Eggy, 2 November 2017)

Strategies for Enhancing Better Leadership Team in STEC

Reviewing numerous barriers and challenges, the strategies or solutions to enhance the leadership development in STEC are mainly needed. These could be achieved by:

Developing self-awareness among the leader, the team and the members of STEC

In order to achieve the goals of STEC, it needs to develop self-awareness among the leader, team and members in which each person has certain roles and responsibilities of STEC. In this matter, they should be aware of the tasks without being reminded by the others. On the other hand, to embrace it the self-awareness, the adaptation of emotional and cultural intelligence as well as skills is required.

Creating a clear vision of the organization of STEC for future

In arranging programs, a leader should pay more attention to the vision of STEC. Therefore, the vision of the organization should be determined at first. When the organization does not have a clear vision, the programs that will be designed will not run well.

Developing strategic goals and innovative programs

Budgeting and planning of works or programs need to be decided earlier in order to be implemented well in the future. In this case, developing strategic goals are firstly made by the leader and team. In addition, the leader of STEC should have initiations to attract the member's interest in joining STEC through innovative programs such as holding English festival, English speech contest, etc. This can be achieved to have sponsors both from inside or outside. Through sponsors, STEC has opportunities to create some innovative programs.

Developing cooperation and networking with other institutions

Networking is an important source for improving an organization. Regarding this, the leader and team of STEC should be proactive in building cooperation with others such as universities, finance, and school to support the programs.

Involving lecturers and the officers to enhance STEC development

The lack of involving lecturers in STEC probably becomes one of the factors of why STEC has less powerful. For this reason, it is suggested that the leader of STEC and the team involve the English lecturers to participate and give trainings for STEC. A collaborative culture emphasizes strong, mutually reinforcing exchanges and linkages between teachers and departments and policies, procedures, standards and tasks that are designed to encourage teamwork and camaraderie. Teachers see themselves as 'leaders' and 'owners' of the culture rather than employees (Louis, 2017).

Enhancing the leader's competency through leadership trainings

In order to manage the team in the organization, a leader should be equipped by a number of trainings including a leadership skill. With regard to this, the leader of STEC rarely joins the leadership training. Therefore, the competency is needed to be fostered. Though the length and design of leadership training programs are highly variable, this program was designed to introduce young physicians to the theory and practice of leadership; make them aware of the kinds of assistance they can seek to support them in taking on these challenges; provide them with tools to identify their own strengths and weaknesses as leaders and act on identified gaps; and provide peer support and mentoring for their activities after the program (Mcgrath et al., 2016).

Optimizing organizational performance and quality of the leader and team of STEC

Organizational performance is one of the keys to attract someone. Regarding it, the leader and team of STEC considerably need to improve their quality and organizational performance.

Developing a set of guidelines in running programs

When running a program, a set of guidelines are importantly designed as a guide. In fact, there are no work plans or guidelines in STEC. Consequently, the programs are incidentally done making the performance does not run well.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, men and women have now equality in a leadership opportunity. STEC (STAIN English Club) is one of the organizations lead by a female student of STAIN Kudus. Further, the team of STEC mostly consists of more women than men. Regarding this, the need of preparing qualified leaders is considerably crucial to

improve STEC development. To avoid the stereotype of negative judgment for a woman leader, the strategies for enhancing better leadership team in STEC are necessary. These include developing self-awareness among the leader, the team and the members of STEC, creating a clear vision of the organization of STEC for future, developing strategic goals and innovative programs, developing cooperation and networking with other institutions, involving lecturers and the officers to enhance STEC development, enhancing the leader's competency through leadership trainings, optimizing organizational performance and quality of the leader and team of STEC and developing a set of guidelines in running programs. It is highly suggested that future researchers conduct studies of gender and leadership in other fields from various disciplines in more detail. By conducting such research, we would possibly obtain wider insights of the role of women's leadership in an organization.

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