

EDUCARE

International Journal for Educational Studies

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TABLE OF CONTENT

Editor's Note ♦ ii

HILAL AHMAD WANI,
*New Models and E-Learning Trends in Teacher Education
and Professional Development* ♦ 1-10

NALINI ARUMUGAM, GERALDINE DE MELLO & INDRANI MUTHUSAMY,
Patterns of Interaction among Mono-Cultural English as Second Language Learners ♦ 11-26

DEDENG ROSIDIN,
*Al-Tarbiyah Meaning in Al-Qur'an and its Implication in Learning
and Teaching Process Based on the Islamic Education* ♦ 27-40

RAMLEE MUSTAPHA & ZAHARATUL LAILA ABDUL RAHIM,
Problem-Based Learning in Malaysian Technical School ♦ 41-54

ROSEMARIE SUTJIATI NJOTOPRAJITNO,
*Efforts to Enhance the Learning of Social Sciences through the Role
of the Strategic Factors of Accountability* ♦ 55-62

NAJEEMAH MOHD YUSOF,
School Principals Leadership and Teachers' Stress Level in Malaysian Primary Schools ♦ 63-82

KUSNO & JOKO PURWANTO,
*Effectiveness of Quantum Learning for Teaching Linear Program at the Muhammadiyah
Senior High School of Purwokerto in Central Java, Indonesia* ♦ 83-92

SUHAILA SANIP & NOOR FADZILAH ZULKIFLI,
*Significance of English Literacy and Academic Performance
of Medical Students in USIM* ♦ 93-98

YAYAN NURBAYAN,
*Using the Imitating Model Techniques on Insya Teaching
for Improving the Student's Writing Ability in Thesis* ♦ 99-106

Info-edu-tainment ♦ 107-110

Efforts to Enhance the Learning of Social Sciences through the Role of the Strategic Factors of Accountability

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ABSTRACT

The urgency to improve the quality of human resources is experiencing continuous escalation. Education holds the key to answer this demand. Social science is an important part of education that is very useful to provide students with various knowledge and skills. In Indonesia social science tends to be underestimated and many perceived social science as a lesson that only require students to memorize some subject matter without involving further and higher level of thinking. This paper tries to examine the attempt to improve social science's effective learning process through the role of accountability's strategic factors. This research is using quantitative approach through statistical test. The end results show that implementation of accountability in its strategic factors will eventually improve the quality of social science's effective learning process and the graduates. In order to implement and operate an adequate system of accountability there are various requirements that must be met. Accountability must be thorough and integrated in the institution. Accountability also requires funds and sufficient time for their implementation to demonstrate the expected output. Hopefully, the implementation of accountability in its strategic factors will enhance the dignity, value, and position of social science in order to provide qualified human resources in Indonesia's development.

KEY WORDS: social science; human resources; improvement; accountability; strategic factors.

INTRODUCTION

Globalization makes cooperation and competition between countries higher and covers a wider area. Qualified and competent human resources are absolutely necessary. In this case the government and society are responsible for the success of education in order to create the desired workforce. Social sciences education is one important part of education that is taught to students in order to equip them with various kinds of knowledge and expertise that is expected to be useful in the real life and in the workplace.

In Indonesia, there are many who think that social sciences are a second-class lessons and considered inferior compared with the other lessons. In senior high school level for

example, students who have such a good scores are advised to enter the science stream which considered having higher levels of difficulty. In other words, social sciences is considered to have lower levels of difficulty and someone is considered eligible and pass if he is able to memorize various theories being taught even though he may not understand it and not been able to apply them in real life and in the workplace. Further, there are peoples who consider social sciences as meaningless memorizing lessons without the need to cultivate students' thinking in such a way as to produce a creative thinking. When viewed from the history of social science and how persistent the figures of the social sciences in the fight for social science coupled with the importance of this science in the world, then these things should not happen. Social sciences should be able to stand equal with other sciences in contributing to the advancement of human civilization in the world.

In this study the researchers attempted to give contributions in an effort to improve the learning of social studies through the role of strategic factors of accountability. Accountability itself is part the social sciences thought that aim to improve and ensure the quality of human life. Implementation of the strategic component of accountability is expected to improve the quality of learning in social studies as well as the reputation of social sciences as a lessons that highly disciplined and highly beneficial.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Sciences

In the beginning, the social science that is taught in Indonesia's schools is an integration and simplification of various branches of social sciences. Hoed (2001) stated that social science emphasis on the interaction between humans and between humans and the environment (nature). Since it has been simplified and integrated, the science is taught to students ranging from elementary school level up to levels higher. In its development in Indonesia, this science began to split into separate scientific knowledge which is also the problem areas and branches of social sciences earlier. Some problem areas and branches of social sciences are anthropology, political science, sociology, economics, communication, etc. Social science itself is the study of humans and its relationship with the community and society. It also examines how humans run their lives.

In its early history, social sciences have many names such as behavioral science, moral science, human science, etc. Porter et al. (2003:1) noted that the phrase 'Sciences Morales et politique' was introduced in France in 1770, and in 1795 the social sciences is labeled as a

second class at the Institut de France. In history there are many who regard social science as a second class science which is inferior from natural sciences which are shown first. Social science is also often regarded as underdeveloped in comparison to other science plus many people question its appropriateness as a science. In the course of its long history many great figures appear, they managed to fight for social science position existence as a science that can stand parallel to the natural sciences.

Accountability

Trow (1996:310) defines accountability as an obligation to provide reports to others, to provide justification, to answer various questions about how the resources have been used and to what effect. From the definition above it can be concluded that accountability is an obligation to give account or to answer and explain the performance and actions of a person/corporate/ head of an organization to those who have the right or obligation to ask for their responsibility. Further, Trow (1996) in Currie and Huisman (2004) suggested that the function of accountability is first to limiting any absolute power, thus weakening the possibility of someone to perform any action of manipulation and fraud and would also strengthen the legitimacy of various institutions that are required to provide a report to the particular group. Second, accountability is claimed to be able to maintain or even improve the quality of performance by forcing the parties involved to examine their activities and operations critically and place them into visible position that is capable to be given a critical input from outside parties. Third, accountability can be used as a device regulation through various reports and explicit and implicit criteria that must be met by the institutions that give reports. Burke (2005:2) argues that accountability imposes six demands on officials or their agents for government or public service organizations, including colleges and universities. First, they must demonstrate that they have used their powers properly. Second, they must show that they are working to achieve the mission or priorities set for their office or organization. Third, they must report on their performance. Fourth, the two “E” words of public stewardship that is efficiency and effectiveness require accounting. Fifth, they must ensure the quality of the programs and services produced. Last, they must show that they serve public needs.

Educational accountability is an embodiment of the obligations of educational institutions to account for the success or failure of implementation of the education process. In the context of learning, we need to always strive to repair and improve learning process so

that the learning process lasts optimal and effective, and can improve the quality of its graduates. According to Brown (2003) in Bober (2004), there are seven areas of accountability.

1. Leadership, which explores how senior leaders attend to organizational values, directions and performance expectations; focus on students and stakeholders, student and organizational learning, empowerment and innovation; and address public/community responsibilities.
2. Strategic Planning, which examines how the organization develops and deploys strategic objectives and action plans, and then measures their quality, impact and/or effectiveness.
3. Student, Stakeholder, and Market Focus, which targets how the organization determines the requirements, expectations and preferences of its constituents; builds relationships with them; and uncovers the key factors that lead to their satisfaction, persistence and, ultimately, to programmatic excellence.
4. Information and Analysis, which focuses on the organization's information management and performance measurement systems -- in particular, on how the data these systems generate are analyzed.
5. Faculty and Staff Focus, which delves into the ways in which the organization encourages faculty and staff to develop to their full potential and builds/maintains a positive work environment that fosters performance excellence and personal/organizational growth.
6. Process Management, which investigates key aspects of the organization's strategies for maintaining/supporting all critical workflow (student services, support, instructional design/delivery, etc.).
7. Organizational Performance Results, which explores the outcomes associated with student learning, finances (budget, marketplace) and operational effectiveness and how well they compare to the performance levels of key competitors (schools or other selected groups/entities).

In order to generate maximum impact, the accountability should be applied to all existing areas that can support each other and produce real benefits.

METHODS

This research is non-experimental research. The purpose of this research is to obtain the description of the characteristics of variables or properties of something that is in progress at the time the study was conducted and to examine the causes of these symptoms. The object of research is the leadership, faculty, and students who are active in student organization and has attended four semesters at Maranatha Christian University in Indonesia.

The research refers to the explanation design, using a quantitative approach. The quantitative approach is simply more refers to collecting data and analyzing information statistically by using statistical structural equation modeling (SEM).

This research has established a number of variables included in the independent variable and dependent variable.

1. Visionary, response capacity, alertness, intelligence, leadership capacity are independent variables that affect the leadership as the dependent variable.
2. Quality of human resources, professionalism, desirable organization culture, adequacy of management information systems, systems of incentive, financial policy are independent variables that affect the management capacity as the dependent variable.
3. Education, research, community service, administrative tasks, and advisement are independent variables that affect faculty quality performance as the dependent variable.
4. Relevancy of the curriculum, the effective learning process, the effective and efficiency resources, the effective of quality assurance, and quality graduate are independent variables that affect effective learning as the dependent variable.

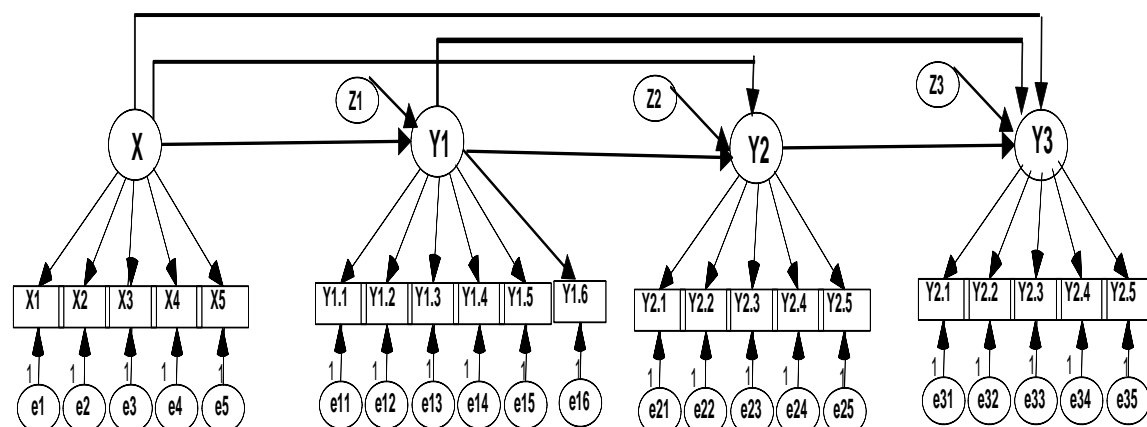


Figure 1. Path Diagram of Stuctural Equation Relationships Model

Leadership (X), Management Capacity (Y₁), Faculty Quality Performance (Y₂) dan Effective Learning (Y₃)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Role of the Strategic Factors of Accountability

From the research that has been done there are several findings.

1. Leadership strategic component and accountability are capable to form management capacity and influence significantly. Up to 40.60% variation that occurs in leadership can be explained by the management capacity.
2. Leadership in an institution or educational institution has a positive and significant relationship with sub variables visionary (53.90%), the response capacity (75.00%), alertness (52.40%), intelligent (78.70%), and leadership capacity (68.90%).
3. Management capacity (management capacity) has a positive and significant relationship with sub variables quality of human resources (50.40%), professionalism (62.10%), desirable organization culture (75.50%), adequacy of management information systems (46, 80%), the system of incentive (53.70%), and financial policy (42.90%).
4. The variance that occurred in faculty quality performance positively and directly affected by management capacity but not directly influenced by leadership. The effect of management capacity is 31.90%. The rest 68.1% was the influence of other variables that can not be explained by model. Leadership indirectly affects faculty quality performance through management capacity. The amount of the influence of leadership on faculty quality performance is 18.10%.
5. Quality performance of teachers and lecturers (faculty quality performance) has a positive and significant relationship with sub variables education (65.10%), research (74.10%), community service (63.70%), administrative tasks (55.80%), and advisement (71.40%).
6. The variance that occurs in effective learning is positively and directly affected by faculty quality performance. The effect of faculty quality performance is 39.30%.
The rest 60.70% is the influence of other variables that can not be explained by model. Leadership and management capacity indirectly affect effective learning through quality faculty performance. The amount of the influence of leadership on effective learning is 16.50% and the influence of management capacity towards

effective learning is 18.10%. Effect of leadership, management capacity, and faculty quality performance together towards effective learning is 73.90%.

7. Effective learning has a positive and significant relationship with sub variables relevancy of the curriculum (47.60%), the effective learning process (62.30%), the effective and resource efficiency (55.40%), effectiveness of quality resources (69.40%), and quality graduate (52.10%).

Efforts to Enhance the Learning of Social Sciences through the Role of the Strategic Factors of Accountability

The problem that many complaints both by educators, students, alumni and the community in social sciences learning is about how learning is delivered to students. Most of the existing educational institutions are still using one-way lecture method and adjusted to the test to find out how deep the ability of students to remember and memorize the material that has been delivered. This method is the most simple and does not require large funds but the quality of results and output is questionable. To direct students' thinking processes to a higher level would need a deeper manner. Some schools obviously already use more advanced manner and provide various facilities such as laboratories in social studies lessons, but this is still limited to certain, small numbers of schools.

In this study the researchers did not directly working to find ways of improving learning through changes in social studies subject matter, the methodology which the lessons delivered, the forms of test , etc. Researchers take a step backwards to obtain a clearer picture on an educational institution (schools and colleges) more clearly and suggest that the effort to enhance the learning of social sciences can be done through the implementation of the strategic factors of accountability on educational institutions as a whole.

Accountability involves a large number of factors. From these factors the researcher took several strategic factors that are assumed have the capability to increase effective learning of social sciences. Application of accountability in this study focused on leadership, management capacity, faculty quality performance, and effective learning. This is because the researchers looked at the problems that occur in the social science learning in Indonesia are not just about the subject matter, type of test questions, etc. Changes and improvements should be implemented as a whole at the level of educational institutions in this regard at the school or college. Changes and improvements at this level are assumed to influence either directly or indirectly to the subject matter, learning methodologies, the questions that are

tested, and various other systems on social sciences education. It has been tested in the previous section and found that accountability will improve the quality of all factors of an educational institution, including educators and the learning process the result will have a positive feed back planning stage and further improvement.

With the implementation of accountability in all aspects of an educational institution will ultimately improve the quality of teaching learning of social sciences conducted at that institution. This process needs to be done thoroughly and repeatedly in order to achieve the expected results in the future.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the examination which was held in the previous section, there have been several findings which are assembled into a variety of conclusions, implications and suggestions.

1. Application of accountability can improve the quality of the learning process effectively in the field of social sciences.
2. To be able to function properly, accountability needs to be applied in a comprehensive and interlinked or integrated into the strategic factors. This means it would take the involvement of all parties involved to cooperate and equate their views toward improving the quality of education that are currently and continuously implemented.
3. The positive impact of the implementation of accountability on the strategic factors may not be directly visible and significantly and requires sufficient time to allow the process of quality improvement occur repeatedly. This means it takes the consistency of the parties involved to be disciplined in implementing accountability in an educational institution.
4. Application of accountability on the strategic factors are also possible would require some funds to support this process and accountability system. This means there is a need for approval and commitment from all parties involved to support the implementation of accountability in educational institutions.
5. Besides the improvement in the learning of social sciences, application of accountability on the strategic factors is also possible to be done on other learning in order to improve quality. In this regard, several adjustments that are flexible, athletic and creative are needed since there might be differences of purpose and problems faced by the different course of learning. Differences may also occur due to the differences in educational

institutions both in terms of levels (elementary, junior high, high school, college), in terms of type, region, and so forth. Therefore, efforts to extend the practices of accountability at every different condition need to be taken seriously and developed further in the future

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