

Openness to Change Non-Academic Staff of Higher Education Institution in South Kalimantan Region

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Abstract. The competition in the global education market at the national level requires both public and private universities in the South Kalimantan region, as they must continue to strive to adapt to the demands of change and government policies if they want to survive. Enhancing services is essential for efficient university governance, particularly in the administrative domain. Traditionally performing routine work, non-academic staff must demonstrate an openness to change to fulfill changing service expectations. This study examines the variables that affect non-academic staff members' openness to change, emphasizing the functions of transformational leadership, transparent communication, and organizational trust. The research employs a quantitative design, with a cross-sectional survey design. The 251 participants were selected through purposive sampling. The instruments used include adapted scales such as the Openness to Change Scale, the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire Form 5X-Short, the Transparent Communication Scale, and the Organizational Trust Inventory-Short Form. The multiple linear regression was utilized to analyze the data. The results show that transformational leadership, transparent communication, and organizational trust collectively affected openness to change, but only organizational trust individually affected openness to change. Therefore, these factors must be carefully considered and maintained to enhance non-academic staff's openness to change within universities.

Keywords: Openness to change; Organizational trust; Transformational leadership, Transparent communication; Non-academic staff

Abstrak. Persaingan pasar dunia Pendidikan di Tingkat Nasional menuntut PTN dan PTS di wilayah Kalimantan Selatan untuk terus berupaya beradaptasi dengan tuntutan perubahan dan kebijakan Pemerintah apabila ingin tetap bertahan. Peningkatan pelayanan sangat penting bagi tata kelola perguruan tinggi, khususnya di ranah administratif. Tenaga Kependidikan yang identik dengan pekerjaan rutin, harus menunjukkan sikap keterbukaan pada perubahan untuk memenuhi standar reformasi dalam pelayanan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki faktor-faktor yang memengaruhi keterbukaan

tenaga kependidikan terhadap perubahan melalui peran kepemimpinan transformasional, komunikasi transparan, dan kepercayaan pada organisasi dalam memfasilitasi keterbukaan tersebut. Metode penelitian menggunakan desain penelitian kuantitatif dengan desain cross-sectional. Sebanyak 251 partisipan dipilih melalui teknik purposive sampling. Alat ukur yang digunakan merupakan skala yang sudah diadaptasi antara lain skala keterbukaan pada perubahan, skala Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire Form 5X-Short, skala komunikasi transparan, dan skala Organizational Trust Inventory-Short Form. Analisis data dilakukan dengan regresi linear berganda. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kepemimpinan transformasional, komunikasi transparan, dan kepercayaan pada organisasi secara bersama berperan signifikan terhadap keterbukaan pada perubahan, tetapi hanya kepercayaan pada organisasi yang berperan secara parsial terhadap keterbukaan pada perubahan. Oleh karena itu, ketiganya perlu diperhatikan dan dipelihara agar tenaga kependidikan di perguruan tinggi lebih terbuka dalam menerima perubahan.

Kata kunci: Keterbukaan pada perubahan; Kepercayaan pada organisasi; Kepemimpinan transformasional; Komunikasi transparan; Tenaga kependidikan

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BACKGROUND

The world of education continues to face rapid social, political, economic, and technological changes, requiring educational institutions to demonstrate flexibility and dynamism to adapt to their surroundings. This adaptability is crucial for ensuring positive and conducive educational growth amidst global human resource competition (Asbari et al., 2020). Several policies and programs have been implemented to support this, such as government initiatives related to education (MBKM program, changes in governance), the adoption of new technologies, and global trends in education, all of which require universities to be ready for change. It is particularly challenging for the four public universities (PTN) in South Kalimantan, which serve as benchmarks for the adaptability to changes and government policies. Additionally, 23 private universities (PTS) and 22 private academies (Perda, 2022) must continuously strive to adapt to the demands of change and government policies to survive.

In addition to educational innovation and supporting facilities, it is also necessary to improve services through the involvement of non-academic staff, particularly in administrative services, which are pivotal factors in the success of policy programs (Jati et al., 2022). Non-academic staff are required to carry out their duties optimally, including being ready to enhance their qualifications and quality to support the higher education process. Moreover, as frontline providers of services, they are expected to have the ability to quickly adapt to changes in the work environment (Anardani et al., 2021).

In this context, attitudes and behaviors that reflect openness to change are essential for the sustainability of successful change (Augustsson et al., 2017). Studies in the Swedish higher education sector analyzed the role of non-academic staff (administrative professionals), revealing their significant impact on university management. Although

they have limited formal authority in decision-making processes, their influence is often indirect. Nonetheless, these non-academic staff are crucial for maintaining a broad perspective, acting as imperative figures who remind internal stakeholders of the university's organizational goals (Karlsson & Rytberg, 2016). A preliminary study conducted at one of the public and private universities in the South Kalimantan region regarding the MBKM program policy found that many non-academic staff still lacked an understanding of the program, particularly concerning the administrative system and the limited information they received about the program. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct further research on the openness to change among non-academic staff in responding to the program and policy. Several factors that bestow an attitude of openness to change include transformational leadership, transparent communication, and organizational trust (Yue et al., 2019; Zainab et al., 2022).

Recent studies have highlighted the importance of considering the context-specific factors that influence employee behavior and attitudes (Mascarenhas et al., 2020; Shah et al., 2020). However, there is limited research on the impact of transformational leadership, transparent communication, and organizational trust on openness to change among non-academic staff in higher education institution (public and private universities) in South Kalimantan. This study aims to fill this gap by exploring the relationships between these variables and its impact on openness to change among non-academic staff.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Openness to Change

Openness to change is recognized as a fundamental factor in fruition success during a change process (Miller et al., 1994). According to Sinval et al. (2021), openness to change determines the success of an organization when encountering new policies, undergoing change, and new structures in workplaces. Devos et al. (2007) define openness as the drive to support change and maintain a positive view of the benefits it can bring. Additionally, it implies an individual's psychological inclination to initiate change (Wanberg & Banas, 2000). Openness in individuals begins with trust and a sense of security, allowing them to communicate openly, even about personal matters that others might not know (Azis et al., 2022).

The essential factor of openness to change lies in the individual's cognitive and behavioral flexibility in dealing with change and focusing on whether its change will beneficially affect their work (Choi, 2011; Chai et al., 2020). A high level of openness to change can result in increased collaboration and prevent the emergence of resistant behavior to change, such as conflict and disharmony, deliberate reduction in production, and lack of cooperation with management (Zainab et al., 2022). Research from Erlyani et al. (2024) found that creating openness to change in PTN Satker non-academic staff can be achieved by actively increasing the dissemination of information related to change, promoting communication at all levels, and providing opportunities for them to contribute their ideas and skills in change efforts. Therefore, anticipating the benefits of change is required in shaping openness to change (Streb, 2016).

The Relationship among Transformational Leadership, Transparent Communication, Organizational Trust, and Openness to Change

A successful change effort should not only focus on employees but also on fostering effective relationships between leaders and subordinates (Sari, 2018). According to Peng et al. (2021), leaders serve as role models for their employees and are willing to sacrifice their interests for the common good. Leaders exhibiting transformational leadership typically demonstrate behaviors conducive to change, encouraging employees to adopt norms that support change and emulate behaviors aligned with organizational goals (Peng et al., 2021). Transformational leadership that is communicative, participatory, and engages employees in every stage of the change process encourages proactive employee involvement and mitigates resistance to change (Nordin, 2012; Sari, 2018).

H1: Transformational leadership, transparent communication, and organizational trust will affect non-academic staff openness to change.

The transformational leadership is characterized by transparent communication, a focus on employee involvement, and actively engaging employees in the change process. This approach inspires employees to take the initiative in responding to change and helps reduce their discomfort with it (Nordin, 2012; Penava & Sehic, 2014). Yue et al. (2019) found in their research that transformational leadership and communication are key factors influencing an attitude of openness to change.

H2: Transformational leadership will affect non-academic staff openness to change.

When implementing changes, organizations should solicit employee feedback throughout the change process to grasp the most concerning and pertinent topics (Li et al., 2016). Transparent communication can be an effective means of creating opportunities for further improvement in stakeholder relations, legitimizing policy and decision-making processes, and enhancing the organization's reputation (Syahrial & Ananto, 2022). Transparent communication can be defined as communication that includes three important components: the substantiality or adequacy of the information conveyed, participation through two-way communication and feedback, and accountability or responsibility for the information (Men, 2014; Yue et al., 2019). In an organization, transparent communication is accurate, voluntary communication that results in perceptions of meaningful or relevant transparency (Holland et al., 2018; Schnackenberg & Tomlinson, 2016). Yue and Walden (2023) also explained that transparent communication can encourage employees to re-evaluate organizational changes and participate in secondary assessment processes that can guide the organization in a more positive direction.

H3: Transparent communication will affect non-academic staff openness to change.

On the other hand, organizational trust is essential during the phase of change, as it enables members to navigate and respond to change effectively and constructively (Oreg et al., 2011). Trust is essential in helping individuals feel more comfortable facing change, making them more open to receiving and sharing information about the change (Legi et al., 2023). Shared trust within the organization fosters a culture that encourages productive learning and risk-taking (Erlyani et al., 2024). High levels of trust in the organization lead employees to be more willing to change their attitudes, values, and assumptions, and increase their commitment (Herold et al., 2007). Employee trust in the organization, which can potentially result from effective leadership and communication, can reduce uncertainty and psychological stress, leading to greater acceptance of change (Yue et al., 2019). Organizational trust is reflected in employees' confidence in achieving

organizational goals and their belief that organizational actions will benefit them (Verburg et al., 2018).

H4: organizational trust will affect non-academic staff openness to change

Based on the explanation, the research model and hypotheses are shown in Figure 1.

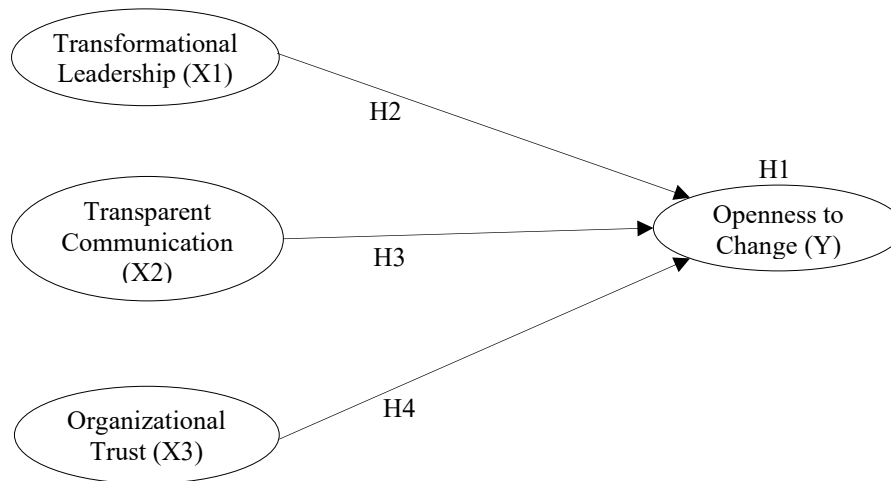


Figure 1. Research Model

RESEARCH METHODS

The study employed a cross-sectional survey design to investigate the openness to change among non-academic staff of higher education institution in South Kalimantan, Indonesia. The sample comprised 251 non-academic staff members, including 161 from public universities (ULM & Politeknik Negeri Tanah Laut) and 90 from private universities (UMB, Akademi Keperawatan Bethesda Serukam, Politeknik Kesehatan Borneo Citra Medika, STAI Darul Ulum Kandangan, Universitas NU Kalsel, Politeknik Hasnur, Politeknik Unggulan Kalimantan, STIKES ISFI Banjarmasin, STIMI Banjarmasin, STIE Pancasetia, STIA Bina Banua, STIKES Husada Borneo, and Universitas PGRI Kalimantan), selected using a purposive sampling technique based on the criteria of being non-academic staff from both public and private universities through a webinar held on August, 14th 2024. Sample were collected via google form.

Data collection was carried out using self-administered questionnaires. The questionnaires were adapted from established instruments to assess the study variables. The Openness to Change (OC) scale was developed by Miller et al. (1994) and translated into Indonesian by Erlyani et al. (2024). The scale has a reliability coefficient of $\alpha=0.779$ and consists of five items. Transformational leadership (TL) was assessed using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire Form 5X-Short (MLQ Form 5X), developed by Avolio and Bass (1995) and translated into Indonesian by Asmoro et al. (2021). The MLQ Form 5X-Short has a reliability coefficient of $\alpha=0.967$ and consists of 20 items. Transparent communication (TC) was assessed using the Transparent Internal Communication Scale, developed by Rawlins (2009), which has a reliability coefficient of $\alpha=0.944$ and consists of 16 items. Organizational trust (OT) was assessed using the Organizational

Trust Inventory-Short Form (OTI-SF), developed by Cumming and Bromiley (1996), which has a reliability coefficient of $\alpha=0.876$ and consists of 12 items.

Data analysis in this study includes both assumption tests and hypothesis testing. Assumption tests consist of residual normality tests, linearity tests, and multicollinearity tests. Hypothesis testing is carried through multiple linear regression with SPSS 26.0 to determine the effect of those independent variables to openness to change, with a significance level of 0.05.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Results

The results of this study include demographic data, assumption test results, and hypothesis test results. The demographic data of the participants are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Participants (n = 251)

Characteristic	n	Percentage (%)
Sex		
Male	79	31.5
Female	172	68.5
Age		
< 31 years old	77	30.7
31 – 44 years old	102	40.6
> 45 years old	72	28.7
Educational Background		
High school/Vocational high school equivalents	30	12.0
Diploma	43	17.1
Bachelor Degree (S1)	147	58.5
Master Degree (S2)	31	12.4
Job Tenure		
1 – 10 years old	136	54.2
11 – 20 years old	65	25.9
> 20 years old	50	19.9
Higher Education Institution		
Public University	161	64.1
Private University	90	35.9

The sample included 79 males (31.5%) and 172 females (68.5%), with educational backgrounds ranging from high school/vocational high school equivalents to master's degrees (S2). The age range was from 21 to 58 years old ($M=37.18$; $SD=9.66$), and their job tenure ranged from 1 to 36 years ($M=12.02$; $SD=9.06$).

The assumption tests were conducted as prerequisites before performing the analysis. In the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, a significance value of 0.200 was obtained for the standardized residual. Therefore, it can be concluded that the residual scores are normally distributed ($D(251)=0.046$, $p=0.200$). This is also supported by the visual inspection of the P-P Plot and Q-Q Plot, where most data points are close to the diagonal

line. Additionally, the linearity test results showed that $F(1, 250)=212.57$, $p<0.05$ (for OC and TL), $F(1, 250)=71.65$, $p<0.05$ (for OC and TC), and $F(1, 250)=1281.67$, $p<0.05$ (for OC and OT) in the linearity row. This indicates a linear relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Furthermore, the multicollinearity test results revealed the variance inflation factor (VIF) for the variables was less than 5 (TL=2.689; TC=2.151; OT=1.414), indicating no multicollinearity issues in the regression model.

Table 2. Descriptive Test and Pearson Correlation

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
Openness to change (OC)	23.73	3.712	-	0.248*	0.144*	0.610*
Transformational leadership (TL)	98.43	16.009		-	0.728*	0.553*
Transparent communication (TC)	55.29	8.797			-	0.323*
Organizational trust (OT)	74.72	13.108				-

Source: Data processing; * $p < 0.05$.

Based on Table 2, the correlation test results show that transformational leadership has a significant relationship with openness to change ($r=0.248$; $n=251$; $p<0.01$, two-tailed). There is also a significant relationship between transparent communication and openness to change ($r=0.144$; $n=251$; $p<0.01$, two-tailed). Organizational trust similarly shows a significant relationship with openness to change ($r=0.610$; $n=251$; $p<0.01$, two-tailed).

Table 3. Multiple Regression Test

Variables	B	95% CI	β	t	p
(Constant)	10.537	[7.790; 13.284]		7.555	< 0.001
Transformational leadership (TL)	-0.027	[-0.065; 0.010]	-0.117	-1.430	0.154
Transparent communication (TC)	0.004	[-0.037; 0.045]	0.014	0.185	0.853
Organizational trust (OT)	0.282	[0.232; 0.331]	0.668	11.219	< 0.001

Source: Data processing; $F(3, 247)=50.526$; $p<0.05$.

The results of the multiple regression tests indicate that transformational leadership, transparent communication, and organizational trust jointly predict openness to change ($R^2=0.380$; $F(3, 247)=50.526$; $p<0.05$), supporting H1. Additionally, the analysis shows the prediction results of each independent variable on the dependent variable. Transformational leadership doesn't significantly predicts openness to change ($\beta=-0.117$; $t(247)=-1.430$; $p=0.154$), as well as transparent communication ($\beta=0.014$; $t(257)=0.185$; $p=0.853$) (not supporting H2 & H3). But, organizational trust significantly predicts openness to change ($\beta=0.668$; $t(247)=11.219$; $p<0.05$) support H4.

Discussions

This study found that transformational leadership, transparent communication, and organizational trust jointly predict openness to change. These results align with the research of Zainab et al. (2022), which also found that transformational leadership, transparent communication, and organizational trust play a significant role in openness to change. Openness to change is the first and most important step in making planned changes successful (Miller et al., 1994). Openness is a personality trait that can predict positive employee behavior, a desire to remain with the organization, and commitment during times of change (Seppala et al., 2010; Streb, 2016).

Transformational leadership is defined as a leadership style that recognizes the need for change, inspires others by forming a vision that serves as the foundation for change, and involves others in committing to making those changes (Marshall, 2010). Members' expectations of change are greatly influenced by their leaders' behavior (Portoghese et al., 2012). Effective leadership goes beyond developing a vision, strategy, and culture of change; it also inspires employees to take an active role in the process (Gill, 2002). Leaders who encourage their subordinates to be open to change through transformational leadership can create an inspiring vision that drives everyone toward the common goal of change and encourages subordinates to embrace it (Anggreini et al., 2022). The strength of transformational leadership in driving change lies in the leader's ability to craft and communicate a compelling vision, empower employees by sharing opportunities, encourage them to prioritize common interests, and build their confidence to adapt quickly to new environments (Carter et al., 2013; Herold et al., 2007). By implementing a transformational leadership style—visionary, creating a positive work environment, and demonstrating support for change—leaders can significantly influence how individuals perceive and respond to change (Lutz Allen et al., 2013; Streb, 2016).

During the change process, university management must be able to meet the demands of the new situation and effectively guide staff, especially non-academic staff, to participate actively. This includes involving them in decision-making related to the change, discussing problems openly and transparently, and being informative and communicative in conveying the message of change and its benefits to ensure the desired outcomes are achieved (Workeneh & Abebe, 2019). Communication is one of the key factors influencing the successful implementation of change (Men & Bowen, 2017). Transparent communication can drive organizational change and is crucial for internal organizational relationships. It also serves as an effective means of creating opportunities for further improvement in stakeholder relationships, enabling leaders to foster better understanding (Kim et al., 2021; Syahril & Ananto, 2022; Dinda & Wahyuni, 2023). However, the results of this study separately found that transformational leadership did not play a significant role in openness to change as studies found by Yue et al. (2019); Dinda and Wahyuni (2023).

When policymakers in universities engage in transparent communication, it can pave the way for change by reducing misinformation and anxiety, as well as clarifying organizational behaviors as perceived by employees (Basit & Siddiqui, 2020). During times of change, transparent communication plays an important role in fostering respect, driven by the ethical character, honesty, and fairness of leaders, as well as their involvement and empathy toward employees. This approach increases employees' positive attitudes toward change, ultimately enhancing their acceptance and support it (Mahadi et al., 2020). Additionally, leaders who motivate their subordinates to embrace change through effective communication can significantly influence the level of acceptance of change (Anggreini et al., 2022).

A substantial body of research has established that organizational trust is a critical determinant of successful organizational change (Thakur & Srivastava, 2018). Dinda and Wahyuni (2023) explained that trust is crucial in organizational change because the emergence of positive reactions to change requires trust from workers. If organizations want to enhance their capacity for building employee trust, they should implement human resource practices that promote open, transparent communication, and create opportunities for employees to engage in decision-making processes that affect their roles (Erturk,

2008). High trust in the organization makes employees more willing to change attitudes, values, and assumptions, and increases commitment (Verburg et al., 2018). This can help create a supportive work environment and allow organizational change to proceed more smoothly (Zainab et al., 2022). High organizational trust also increases openness to change because organizational members feel more comfortable with change and are more likely to see it as an opportunity for growth and development. The more employees trust their organization during change, the more they will rely on its words, actions, and intentions throughout the change process (Yue et al., 2019). The results of this study separately also found that transparent communication did not play a significant role in openness to change as studies found by Yue et al. (2019); Dinda and Wahyuni (2023).

Erturk's (2008) research emphasizes the importance of managing employee trust in the organization to ensure the success of current and future changes. When employees are allowed to be involved in the change implementation process and feel that they can trust the organization's ability to carry out the change, they are more likely to adopt positive behaviors toward it (Devos et al., 2007). Organizations that expect each member to make a positive contribution, and beneficially to the organization need to assess and evaluate the level of trust among their members to take the necessary actions to increase and maintain this trust (Natalia & Hidayat, 2021). The presence of organizational trust among university staff, both academic and non-academic, is crucial, as universities are institutions that foster potential future impacts, not just organizations whose performance is assessed in financial terms (Yue et al., 2019).

The limitations of this study include that the survey was conducted only once during a webinar, as the researchers faced difficulty reaching the subjects directly. Additionally, there was a disparity in the number of participants from public and private universities, which may have led to insufficient representation in the data distribution. The study also did not analyze demographic factors such as gender, age, education level, and job tenure, which could be considered for future research. Future researchers may examine other factors influencing openness to change to provide a broader and richer perspective on changes in higher education (eg. financial governance or policy-making in higher education, etc).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results indicate that transformational leadership, transparent communication, and organizational trust are predictors of openness to change. However, the results of this study found that only organizational trust played a role in openness to change. Therefore, these factors should be carefully considered and maintained to ensure that non-academic staff in higher education are more open to accepting change. Further research is recommended to explore how transformational leadership, transparent communication, and organizational trust synergistically predict openness to change among non-academic staff in both public and private universities in Indonesia. Given the complex dynamics in the higher education environment, such research could deepen our understanding of how transformational leaders inspire and mobilize non-academic staff through honest and open communication practice, strengthening trust in the organization. This study is also crucial for identifying specific factors that fortify or weaken the relationship between these variables and openness to change, with direct implications for leadership development strategies and organizational change policies in higher education.

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