Strategic Agility and Millennials Generation: An Education Policy Formulation

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Strategic agility and the millennial generation are concepts which are expected to work together in the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture, led by millennials of different cultures. In this study, we review the main studies on dexterity in the context of the formulation of the ‘Learning Independent’ and ‘Independent Campus’ educational policies, discussing their relevance, and proposing key aspects of agility strategies to further clarify these concepts. The data was collected through observation and documentation. The results showed that the strategic agility consisted of strategy sensitivity, leadership unity, and the fluency of resources, which tend to be relevant in the assessment of education policy formulation. The main aspects of understanding strategic agility are building emotional ties, paying attention to environmental needs, having strategic sensitivity, mutual trust, building reputation, and creativity. The study of strategic agility in the public organisation, as an innovation in millennial leadership-based public policy, has never been undertaken by other researchers.

Keywords: Strategic agility, Millennial generation, Education policy.

Introduction

Strategic agility has been defined as the ability to rediscover or review organisations and organisational strategies dynamically with rapid changes in the external business environment (Y. L. Doz & Kosonen, 2010). Agility, according to Weber and Dance, is a means to continually adjust to external threats and opportunities (Ahammad, Glaister, & Gomes, 2019). Agility also becomes the ability to adjust between the values of strategic consistency versus
the value of rapid changes associated with unexpected problems, opportunities, and fast-moving trends (Pina, Gomes, Mellahi, Miner, & Rego, 2019).

Today, the ability to move quickly in government organisations tends to be held by millennials. This generation was born from 1981 to the present, with a greater amount of internet usage (Baghdasarin, 2020; Harwanto, Nuari, & Christian, 2020). From Gupta's perspective, millennials work not only for salaries but also pursue dreams; they are skilled people; are deterrent to being subordinates subjected to rules; they do not work for annual goals but seek to fix weaknesses, and improve and enhance excellence; and consider that work is a part of life (Hidayati, 2020).

Changes to the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia for the 2019–2024 period were led by the millennial generation. Of course, the change tends to be significant in every policy related to education because the Minister is of the millennial generation, who has no teaching or lecturing background, which has so far become a tradition in the Ministry of Education and Culture. Ministers usually come from a teaching or lecturing background and have professor and/or doctoral degrees. However, the Minister chosen by the President is a former founder of the company, Star Up (Gojek), with an age that is classified as pertaining to the millennial generation.

As a comparison, several existing studies have examined strategic agility, including strategic agility and human resource management (HRM), which assesses the role of HRM within strategic agility (Ahammad et al., 2019). Strategic agility and HRM outline three main channels through which sovereign wealth fund (SWF) investment has implications for employees (Cumming, Filatotchev, & Reinecke, 2019). Research on strategic agility and organisational creativity shows that organisational agility moderates the negative impacts of competitive and technological uncertainty on organisational creativity (Darvishmotevali, Altinay, & Ali, 2020). Research on strategic agility and international joint ventures (IJVs) has included the willingness paradox of family firms. Such research has found that these dimensions lead to a greater ability to govern the complexities of the relationship, hence reducing opportunistic hazards, and significantly increasing the odds of the long-term success of IJVs (Debellis, Massis, Messeni, Frattini, & Del, 2020). In addition, research on strategic agility has considered how individual executives and human resource practices contribute to providing a profile of skills and capabilities that individuals need in order to best contribute to the strategic agility of their organisations, and the HR practices which are required (Y. Doz, 2019).

Furthermore, the study entitled, “Embedding Strategic Agility: A Leadership Agenda for Accelerating Business Model Renewal”, found that the three main dimensions of the strategic agility framework were presented in our earlier work, and developed corresponding vectors of leadership actions, each of which can enhance a firm's ability to renew its business models (Y.
L. Doz & Kosonen, 2010). Research on culturally agile leaders has identified that they are more inclusive in their hiring practices and are more open to encouraging greater diversity within their own leadership network (Cleveland, 2020). In relation to agile government, a systematic literature review and future research found that, as a response, government organisations are adopting agile approaches as part of their process redesigns, project management, and software development approaches (Editorial, 2018). However, from the various studies, we still have a limited understanding of strategic agility in government organisations, especially in relation to the millennial generation.

**Literature Review**

*Strategic Agility*

Strategic agility consists of adaptive strategic sensitivity, resource fluidity, and collective leadership commitment (Y. Doz et al., 2018). Strategic sensitivity is defined as “the sharpness of perception of, the intensity of awareness and attention to strategic developments” (Debellis et al., 2020). Strategic sensitivity results from both the sharpness and accuracy of perception and from the intensity of awareness of new and evolving strategic situations as they occur, in real time or very close to real time. It provides the basis for strategic sense making (Y. Doz, 2019). Strategic sensitivity relates to the degree of alertness around opportunity exploration and exploitation (Xing, Liu, Boojihawon, & Tarba, 2019). Furthermore, strategic sensitivity identifies specific individual behaviours, and analyses and reviews the skills and practices that drive these behaviours, and the supporting human resource practices which affect the strength of each vector, and the forces that provide energy in fostering the strategic agile (Ahammad et al., 2019). Meanwhile, resource fluidity refers to the internal capability to reconfigure capabilities and redeploy resources rapidly (Pereira, Budhwar, Temouri, Malik, & Tarba, 2020). It is the ability to adjust, adapt, and reconfigure the business system (Debellis et al., 2020). According to McCarthy, an agile organisation can understand and predict changes in the business environment to establish its structure properly (Hassan Ismail, 2020). Finally, agile is related to collective leadership commitment, namely the ability of the firm leader to push firm members to collectively commit to the agreed strategic change (Debellis et al., 2020).

Strategic agility offers a potential path to resolve this paradoxical situation (Pina et al., 2019). Smith and Lewis argued that a paradox can be defined as “contradictory yet interconnected elements that exist simultaneously and persist over time” (Pina et al., 2019). The paradoxical situation of management throughout the company, rather than the separation of exploration and exploitation, is increasingly converging with strategic agility considerations (Y. Doz, 2019). Strategic agility also offers consistent and coherent behavioural and skills results in senior management, more than structure or from duality (Y. Doz, 2019). According to Peter, Biehl and Smith, two concepts inherent to the definition of agility are speed and flexibility (Hassan
Ismail, 2020), and according to the Oxford Dictionary, is it “the ability to move quickly and easily” (Y. Doz, 2019).

Strategic sensitivity is defined as “the sharpness of perception of, the intensity of awareness and attention to strategic developments” (Debellis et al., 2020). Strategic sensitivity results both from the sharpness and accuracy of perception and from the intensity of awareness of new and evolving strategic situations as they occur, in real time or very close to real time. It provides the basis for strategic sense making (Y. Doz, 2019). Strategic sensitivity relates to the degree of alertness surrounding opportunity exploration and exploitation.

Leadership unity is defined as the ability of organisation members to understand and trust each other, enabling firms to quickly take bold strategic decisions and push firm members to collectively commit to the agreed strategic changes (Y. L. Doz & Kosonen, 2010). It is often seen as an unnatural act (Y. Doz, 2019), that owners have to ‘care’ about their business (Y. L. Doz & Kosonen, 2010), as well as the alignment of interests among firm members (Debellis et al., 2020), and thus is a determinant of a firm's ability to fulfil collective commitments (Y. L. Doz & Kosonen, 2010). In essence, one quality of leadership unity that characterises those companies that can reinvent their business models is when top managers ‘care’ (Y. L. Doz & Kosonen, 2010). Last is resource fluidity, which refers to the internal capability to reconfigure capabilities and redeploy resources rapidly (Pereira et al., 2020), the ability to adjust, adapt, and reconfigure the business system (Debellis et al., 2020), and the ability of the leader to push members to collectively commit to the agreed strategic change (Debellis et al., 2020).

Strategic agility becomes the intangible assets and the role of encouraging management and leadership practices that support the core tenets of strategic agility and at a time when a global crisis occurs (Pereira et al., 2020). Strategic agility offers a potential path to resolve this paradoxical situation (Pina et al., 2019), and integration of agility in different operational areas (Shams, Vrontis, Belyaeva, Ferraris, & Czinkota, 2020).

**Millennial Generation**

Rational organisations will certainly consider the competencies of each person who contributes to problem-solving, meaning that competence understands millennial generation education problems. The term, ‘millennial’, was first sparked by William Strauss and Neil in their book titled, “Millennial Rising: The Next Great Generation” (Hidayati, 2020). This generation was born from 1981 and until now, with a greater number of internet users (Baghdasarin, 2020; Harwanto et al., 2020). Pre-born generations of the first generation are known as Generation X (1965–1980), and the baby boomer generation (1946–1964) are also considered to be influenced by seminal events in their own era (Ebeling, Dent, & Kempenich, 2020).
Millennials are the first generation to grow up with the internet, portable technology (e.g. smartphones and tablets), and social media networking applications (e.g. Facebook), and researchers note their preference for the integration of educational progress (Baghdasarin, 2020; Ebeling et al., 2020). Based on the 2015 Central Statistics Agency (BPS) data, the number of millennials in Indonesia has reached 84 million people or 50 per cent of the productive age population (Sukaris & Aries Candra Setyawan, 2020). From the perspective of Gupta, millennials work not only for a salary but also to pursue their dreams; they work for skilled people; are deterrent to being subordinates who are subjected to rules; they do not work for annual goals but to correct weaknesses, and improve excellence; and work is a part of life (Hidayati, 2020). Millennials are most comfortable with teaching skills (Ebeling et al., 2020). On the other hand, some millennials have different lifestyles compared to other generations, and they tend to spend money on experiences rather than goods. Furthermore, with the growth of technology, there are also millennials who like to share their experiences or other content on social media, such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and so on. (Harwanto et al., 2020).

**Method**

This study has two data collection techniques, including observation and documentation. The observations applied moderate participation when attending the launch of the ‘Learning Independent’ and ‘Campus Independent’ education policies at the Ministry of Education and Culture, Indonesia. Several field notes were written to illustrate how the agility strategy was implemented, including place, actor, activity, time, and purpose. The last method is documentation. The document used in this study is a recording of an educational policy explanation captured through the NVivo 12 Plus program.

The data is comprised of analysed field notes, interview transcripts, and related documents which have been made into a compiled and sorted database. The classification and coding of the data is repeated, rearranging the data, and the grouping of the previous code, so that it can form substantive themes to rearrange data, and data interpretation. This stage is the interpretation of data that has been rearranged in the form of a new narrative. The last is a closing word. In making conclusions, the development of subjectivity is carried out for objectivity.

**Findings and Discussion**

The results show that the Ministry of Education and Culture applies the policy strategies of ‘Learning Independent’ and ‘Independent Campus’, to provide freedom to schools and
colleges, in order to interact with environmental developments. The following Figure 1 is an overview of the policy strategy adopted.

**Figure 1.** Education policy

![Diagram of Education Policy](image)

The ‘Learning Independent’ policy consists of four aspects or dimensions: the national standard school examination policies are returned to their respective schools; the national examination policy will be replaced by a competency assessment and character survey; the learning implementation policy plan is simplified; and zoning is relaxed. This is to ensure the continuity of education through transformation (Aly, 2020), and learning media innovation (Waljinah, Dimyati, & Joko, 2020). Furthermore, strategic agility has been explained by the Minister of Education and Culture, as follows:

1. “...we decided to immediately go and do real work things, so not only planning but also issuing policies that are urgently needed by teachers and students throughout Indonesia. So, this is the result of intensive discussions with hundreds of stakeholders, school teachers, principals, heads of offices, education observers, lecturers, and experts in Indonesia and outside Indonesia. Also, this is the result of the discussion. I would like to thank the Ministry of Education and Culture who have also helped develop these programs, thank you ... If the school is still not ready to make changes if it is cold using a format like USBN, which was welcome last year, but for schools that want to make changes for schools that want to do assessments in a more holistic way, it is acceptable”.


This emphasises supporting organisational members to trust and particularly trust one another, enabling the organisation to quickly take challenging decisions, and encourage organisational members to culminate upon agreed strategy changes (Y. L. Doz & Kosonen, 2010). This is an effort to build commitment and gather together. Like the ‘Learning Independent’ policy, the ‘Independent Campus’ policy is also the result of intensive discussion, as explained by the Minister of Education and Culture:

(2) “Higher education has the potential to have the fastest impact on changes in superior human resources. Undergraduate (S1) graduates from tertiary institutions have the potential to develop Indonesia the fastest. The potential is, if the quality of higher education, can improve, especially at the undergraduate level. Higher education in Indonesia must spearhead the most rapid movement because it is very close to the world of work; it must be the quickest innovation of all education units because it is adaptive and always dynamic. Not like that: Innovation is the primary goal of higher education, in studying change and community service in research, it cannot be done without space, innovation can only occur in ecosystems without borders, and this is the spirit or essence, of independent campus policies.”

The direction to build superior human resources through the concepts of ‘independent learning’ and ‘campus of redemption’ is clear and manifested in plans and efforts in the form of policies. The policy statement is very important and is needed as the direction of the institution in the future because the policy is the key to the organisational success (McLay, 2018). Without a clear policy, it will reduce public efficiency and trust (Thompson & Miller, 2003), and the organisation’s stakeholders will not recognise how the organisation works. The sharpness of perception and attention to environmental needs is a feature of strategic sensitivity policy direction, as stated below:

(3) "Universities that have accreditation A and B are directly granted permission to open new study programs, as long as they have cooperation with third parties, namely world-class organizations. This means that universities that have A and B accreditation no longer need to go through the study program licensing process at the Ministry, as long as they can prove that they are collaborating with these four options and world-class. For example, the United Nations, the world bank, USAID, and others, three BUMN and BUMD, and the fourth are the top 100 universities based on QS ranking. These are the four choices that can exist for the first three, which are not the top 100 universities. The study program must prove to the Government that the collaboration is genuine. How to prove it? There are three criteria, which means new cooperation, suggesting that these three criteria. One of them is to show collaboration with third-party partners in curriculum preparation. Second, there is an internship program, and third, there is a cooperation agreement on the recruitment side.”
Cooperation with the United Nations (UN), the World Bank, the United States International Development Agency (USAID), state-owned enterprises (SOEs), and regional business enterprises (BUMD), demonstrates a form of commitment. The second part of the ‘Independent Campus’ policy is the accreditation that is automatically approved by the re-accreditation, which is explained by the Minister of Education and Culture, as follows:

(4) "We will use these three principles in the future, that accreditation must lead to voluntary nature. Almost all developed countries, the system is now optional. So, if certification is needed, it will be prioritized. However, if it's not required, it's okay. It is better to prioritize [and] not emphasize the role of the community, industry, and professional associations to do accreditation and not prioritize the governments that do the certification. Why are we headed in this direction? Because of the more specific disciplines from the more specific domains of knowledge. It is not possible for governments to know and control all information domains. How do you accredit each study program? The study program must be a collaborative association to do this, even other accreditation institutions. The third is having to follow international best practices.”

The third component of the ‘Independent Campus’ policy is state universities, which are facilitated if they want to change their form to become Legal Entity State Universities (PTN-BH). The PTN-BH is the highest level because it has full autonomy in managing finances and resources, including lecturers and education personnel. This college operates similarly to state-owned companies. Another state university is the Public Service Agency State University (PTN-BLU), and is an institution with the second level in terms of autonomy. The management of this institution is similar to a state-owned hospital. All non-tax revenues are managed autonomously and are reported to the State. Finally, the Work Unit State University (PTN-Satker) is a ministry work unit. All of its income, including the Student Education Administration (SPP), must first enter the state account (Ministry of Finance) before being used. With this policy, all state universities are given the opportunity to become a PTN-BH, but they are not forced to do so.

The fourth part of the ‘Independent Campus’ policy is the study rights of undergraduate students, which is three semesters outside the study program. The focus of this policy is eight semesters of students to reach undergraduate status. From the eight semesters, the Ministry requires universities to grant the rights of three semesters that can be taken outside the study program. Without coercion, if the student wants to be entirely in the study program, it is their right, as this is only an option for students, but it is an obligation for universities to provide this option.

Strategic agility is an important element to advance our understanding of why public organisations have their uniqueness and ability to implement change. Previous research has
argued that public organisations have different characteristics in terms of willingness to make changes (Twizeyimana & Andersson, 2019). This includes long-term orientation, trust, and loyalty, that can make it easier to overcome cultural differences, reduce monitoring costs, and opportunistic hazards. The greater the motivation of individual public services, the more likely individuals will seek membership in the public organisation (Christensen & Yesilkagit, 2019; Perry, 2010; Wenzel, Krause, & Vogel, 2019). On the other hand, scholars argue that public organisations are highly controlled by political interests, so it is difficult to make changes (Choi & Chandler, 2020; Perry, 2010). The paradox of willingness to change in the public organisation shows that through strategic agility, they are better able to manage forms of change. In this paper, we uncover this paradox by drawing on the ‘Learning Independent’ and ‘Independent Campus’ policies and submit proposals on how public organisations can implement change.

In fact, the statement of policy direction is very influential on the effectiveness of the public organisations (Homberg, Vogel, & Weiherl, 2019). The direction of the ‘free learning’ policy has a publication process strategy with a different policy, when compared to other ministries in Indonesia that have the same ministerial characteristics (not from political parties or from professionals) as the Ministry of Education and Culture, namely the Ministry of State-Owned Enterprises (BUMN) or the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy. The ‘Learning Independent’ and ‘Independent Campus’ policies were published by inviting stakeholders to attend the Ministry of Education and Culture to listen to the Minister's explanation before the policy was published in the form of ministerial regulations. Stakeholders who attended included members of the House Representative Council (DPR), higher education leaders, Provincial Education Agency heads, student representatives, journalists, and so on. This is the uniqueness of the Ministry of Education and Culture, which is more focused on speed and attention to the environmental development of the partnership program by boosting dissemination (Jatmika, Efita, Setyawati, & Pramita, 2020).

The Ministry of Education and Culture seeks to pay attention to the development of its environment and its policy products. Paying attention to environmental needs is something that is important for the public organisation (Homberg et al., 2019) because it makes a more significant contribution to society (Homberg et al., 2019). They must negotiate with the environment (O’Flynn, 2007) because the environment is always changing and is full of uncertainty (Rabin, 2005). An "intensive discussion with hundreds of stakeholders; school teachers, principals, heads of offices, education observers, lecturers, and experts in Indonesia and outside Indonesia" is one way to pay attention to the environment (Malbon, Carey, & Reeders, 2019). The most effective ways to pay attention to the environmental needs are by learning from them (Perry, 2010), knowing what the problem is (Malbon et al., 2019), and understanding what their needs are (Diefenbach, 2009; Eriksson, 2019; Muraille, 2020). This approach has been proven from several research results, wherein environmental learning in the
twenty-first century focusses on solving environmental problems through education (Ichsan et al., 2020).

The process of paying attention to the development of the strategic environment (Elbanna, 2006) and the sharpness of perception (Y. L. Doz & Kosonen, 2010; Rzepka & Bojar, 2020) characterises the strategic leaders' agility on the dimension of strategic sensitivity (Debellis et al., 2020; Y. Doz, 2019). In short, we argue that because of the emotional ties that pay attention to the environmental needs and have the necessary strategic sensitivity, it raises strategic sensitivity.

Innovation can only occur in an unrestricted ecosystem (Fishenden & Thompson, 2013; Melhem, 2019) and innovation encourages organisational members to collectively commit to change (Audenaert, Decramer, George, Verschuere, & Van Waeyenberge, 2019). Innovation is defined as the development and realisation of new disruptive ideas (Torting, Sørensen, & Røiseland, 2019). Google's innovation ecosystem offers a good example of the important relationship between platform and innovation, which illustrates the difference between traditional outsourcing mechanisms and utility, platform-based ecosystems. By providing a low-cost commodity platform, Google has encouraged various content providers, consumers, innovators, and advertisers to build applications, share data, and buy services in a way that allows them to crowdsource ideas and then ‘cherry-pick’ and invest in the best of these. (Fishenden & Thompson, 2013). The Ministry of Education and Culture builds collaboration with other organisations outside the Ministry, such as industry, foreign universities, and non-government organisations (NGOs) in the form of creating a real partnership, even if it can create a joint technology platform. The partnership is understanding each other (Pang, Lee, & Delone, 2014; Twizeyimana & Andersson, 2019). The ‘Independent Campus’ policy, in the form of establishing new study programs and accreditation, is one form of policy that encourages commitment to change. Strong partnerships will drive change, governments or public organisations to collaborate or partner with other public organisations or private sector businesses to provide quality public services (Pang et al., 2014); only through togetherness will innovation be more effective (Brown, Chouldechova, Putnam-Hornstein, Tobin, & Vaithianathan, 2019).

Some research results show the importance of partnership and innovation in building change (Haque, 1998). The future will require greater teamwork, more autonomous work, and the delegation of responsibilities. Therefore, managers need to acquire appropriate facilitation and coaching skills to develop the full potential of others (Kuchinke & Ardichvili, 2002). Strong partnership and innovation can only be realised through leadership unity in three intangible organisational capabilities, namely market orientation, learning orientation, and quality management capabilities (Pereira et al., 2020).

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In long-term orientation and reputation (Debellis et al., 2020), the Minister of Education and Culture is the former “Gojek” leader and owner. Gojek has become one of the largest creative technology platforms serving millions of users in Southeast Asia by developing three super-applications for customers, for driver-partners, and merchant partners. The institutional independence policy of the education unit is only achieved with the independence of creativity and innovation of the teacher, and only then can learning in the classroom occur in earnest.

A positive reputation is often listed as a selection criteria for desired service providers (Hitt, R. Duane Ireland, & Sexton, 2001). Furthermore, Butler and Cantrell (1984) suggested that reputation is one component of trust in individuals, depending on their position (Kuchinke & Ardichvili, 2002). Reputation can be an important strategic resource for various reasons, such as access to resources (e.g. financial capital) and to help organisations utilise information (Hitt et al., 2001). Meanwhile, creativity is a means of adjusting and reconfiguring resources. Creative leadership is an important differentiator for creating meaning, value and shared impact, understanding the identity of creative leaders and their responsibility to grow the creative community, and can provide a foundation for innovation and transformation (Pfeffermann, 2020). Experience is a positive, productive, and creative learning process (Tong, Loc, Uyen, & Cuong, 2020). Therefore, the ability to be creative and have a positive reputation to configure and adjust the fluidity of higher resources is needed in strategic leadership agility.

Conclusion

In conclusion, effective change willingness strategies are important for public organisations to build trust. The direction of the Ministry of Education and Culture has shown that through the policies of ‘Learning Independent’ and ‘Campus Independent’, they provide freedom to education units (schools and colleges) to build strategic agility. Strategic agility can be created through strategic leadership agility and through three dimensions: 1) strategic sensitivity by building emotional ties, paying attention to environmental needs, and having the necessary strategic sensitivity; 2) leadership unity by means of organisational members to understand and trust one another, enabling the organisation to quickly take bold strategic decisions and encourage members of the organisation to collectively commit to agreed strategic changes; and 3) resource fluidity by building reputation and creativity because they have a higher resource fluidity without reputation and creativity, cannot help in building trustworthy relationships, and cannot guarantee the possibility of long-term success.

Suggestions

This research is limited to public organisations, namely the Ministry of Education and Culture. It only discusses the policy formulation process of ‘Learning Independent’ and ‘Campus Independent’, related to the implementation of the concept of strategic leadership agility.
Therefore, there must be further studies related to the implementation, supervision, evaluation, and impact of the policies. Studies related to how to effectively carry out these policies, and studies of the forms of strategic agility towards the willingness to change public organisations, need to be discussed in depth. The results of this study have provided an overview that an important public organisation pays attention to strategic agility to build internal and external trust.

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