



TECHNIUM
SOCIAL SCIENCES JOURNAL

Vol. 17, 2021

**A new decade
for social changes**

www.techniumscience.com

ISSN 2668-7798



9 772668 779000

The Importance of Soft Skills Training to Improve the Quality of Political Party Cadres

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Abstract. Cadre formation in political parties is very important and determines the quality of human resources capable of making a real contribution to the joint efforts of all elements of the nation building. Leadership and regeneration are two things that are interrelated in organisational development. Regeneration is also very important in an organisation because it is a form of efforts to support the formation of personality integrity and the ability to move others intensively so that a quality leader can be achieved. For this reason, every political party has the duty to provide education and training for its cadres. This research is aimed at answering the questions of how to implement education and training for cadres of political parties, and what soft skills are urgently needed by cadres of political parties in order to improve their quality. This is a qualitative research with a case study approach. Data collection was carried out by semi-structured interviews with political party cadres as well as with community members. This research proves that quality soft skills training for political party cadres which consists of intrapersonal and interpersonal skills is demanding. Intrapersonal skills are mainly related to emotional intelligence and ethical issues. Meanwhile, interpersonal skills cover the ability of communication, leadership skills, thinking skills and problem solving skills.

Keywords. Soft skills training, intrapersonal skills, interpersonal skills, political party cadres

1. Introduction

The realisation of the Vision for Advanced Indonesia is very much determined by superior human resources (HR) in all fields, including politics. This is because the democratic system and mechanism in Indonesia places cadres and representatives of political parties to fill various important positions in government. However, if we look at it carefully, there is no political party in Indonesia today that can purely be called a cadre party. If it does not become a mass party, another pragmatic option is a catch-all party. Both are equally oriented towards getting as many votes as possible instantly in order to win power. The last two elections, 2014 and 2019, confirm this. Of course, internally all parties speak up and carry out various programs intended as regeneration. However, in general, the aim of regeneration is not more than efforts to gain as many votes as possible. Regeneration is more on the target of political recruitment. Regeneration which is really intended as a process of systematic political education with long-term goals is relatively rare. From the news in the mass media, we know that in general the form of regeneration programs is more in the form of seminars, workshops or other short-term party activities.¹

¹ <https://mediaindonesia.com/opini/277210/partai-politik-dan-kaderisasi>

Leadership and regeneration are two things that are interrelated in organisational development. Regeneration is very important in an organisation because it is a form of efforts to support the formation of personality integrity and the ability to intensively motivate others so that they can prepare them to become leaders in the future. So, from this regeneration process a cadre is created. Therefore, it cannot be denied that regeneration is the life of the organisation [1]. The realisation of a good government requires the role of political parties because in a democratic country the elements of government, both executive and legislative, come from political parties. Political recruitment is the selection and appointment of a person or group to carry out a number of roles in the political system in general and government in particular [2].

Only politicians who have integrity and are able to apply national values can increase Indonesia's competitiveness. This is not easy. Moreover, today many people have a cynical view of political parties. This cynical assessment was the result of a politician who was caught in various problems. This of course hurts people's trust in political parties. Apart from that, the very diverse backgrounds of politicians also determine the level of knowledge, skills and attitudes they have. The Regulation of the General Election Commission of the Republic of Indonesia number 20 of 2018 concerning the nomination of members of the DPR, Provincial DPRD and Regency / Municipal DPRD has regulated a number of requirements including education. In this regulation, it is stated that the lowest education for a member of the parliament (DPR), Provincial DPRD and Regency / City DPRD is the graduate of Vocational High School (SMK), Madrasah Aliyah, or other school equivalent.²

However, up to the present time, the quality of cadres of political parties were also questioned. Many cadres of political parties, when interviewed, seem to be less familiar with the problems, even unable to provide solutions and only blame the government. It is the obligation of political parties to provide education and training to their cadres so that in addition to having knowledge of politics, they also have soft skills that greatly support their role in building the nation. The maturation of these cadres are now considered a quite difficult part of regenerating [3]. Soft skills are very influential on a person's success, because having hard skills is not enough in the world of work. Edward Wiggam in [4] states that 400 people or 10% of 4000 people who lose their jobs are due to technical disabilities, meaning that 90% of them lose their jobs due to personality problems.³

Based on the problems described above, this study aims at answering the following questions: (1) how is the implementation of education and training for cadres of political parties, and (2) what soft skills are urgently needed by cadres of political parties. The results of this study will provide a very large contribution for political parties in Indonesia to be able to improve the quality of their cadres through quality education and training.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Political Party Cadres

Law Number 2 of 2008 and Law Number 2 of 2011 concerning Political Parties emphasise that political parties are organisations that are national in nature and are formed by a group of Indonesian citizens voluntarily on the basis of common desires and aspirations to fight for and defend the political interests of members, society, nation and state, as well as maintaining the integrity of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia based on Pancasila (The Five Principles) and the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia.

² <https://www.kompas.com/tren/read/2019/10/07/180200665/pendidikan-mulan-jameela-dipertanyakan-apa-syarat-jadi-anggota-dpr-?page=all>

³ Ibid

According to Carl J. Friedrich, a political party is a group of people who are organised stably with the aim of seizing and maintaining control of the government for their party leaders and based on this supervision, it provides their party members with ideal and material benefits [5]. Political parties have several functions, including as a means of political communication, namely the process of conveying political information from the government to the community and vice versa from the public to the government. The political parties here function to absorb, collect, process and channel the political aspirations of the community in formulating and settling a policy; as a means of political socialisation, namely the process of forming political attitudes and orientation regarding a political phenomenon that is being experienced by a country, this process is conveyed through political education [5].

Meanwhile, political parties need to recruit new members to maintain the sustainability in the world of politics, which are then known as "cadres". The term "cadre" comes from the word "cadre", originally derived from the military term or struggle which comes from the word "cadre" which is defined as the permanent formation of a core force that is needed at any time [6]. In its definition according to the popular scientific dictionary, cadre is a person who is educated to continue the baton of a party or organisation [1]. In other words, cadres are defined as people who are expected to play an important role in an organisation. Regeneration of cadre is a formulation or preparation of human resources to represent political parties in occupying political positions. In producing leaders and cadres who are loyal and qualified to political parties, it is necessary to examine more deeply the regeneration system carried out by a political party.

Basically, the recruitment pattern and regeneration mechanism cover all party activities, starting from admitting members, fostering the quality of cadres, to assigning party cadres to strategic positions (recruitment) [7]. The president of Indonesia himself stated that political parties are the main source of recruitment for national and regional leadership. Some of the candidates for regional head and presidential candidates also came from political parties. If political parties are able to prepare their cadres properly and with mature quality, it is certain that national and regional leadership will also run well.

Existing political elites should be able to implement a political recruitment mechanism that can produce quality political actors in society, because one of the tasks in political recruitment is how the existing political elites can provide qualified political party cadres to sit in the legislative and executive. Many party cadres have become state officials not for the public interest, but for financial interests. This is because parties often demand their cadres to pay large operational fees. This has the potential for public officials to abuse their authority to seek additional funds in order to be able to contribute to party finances.⁴

In addition, in the recruitment process, in order to get the most votes, parties generally look for shortcuts by cooperating with public figures who are well known to the public but whose quality cannot be accounted for and even have never had organisational experience. For this reason, education and training for party cadres with subjects related to character and personality development must be carried out.

2.2 *Soft Skills*

Soft skills are defined as skills, abilities, and traits related to personality, behavioural attitudes rather than formal or technical knowledge [8]. Soft skills are characteristics that affect an individual's personal and professional relationships and work related to career prospects [9].

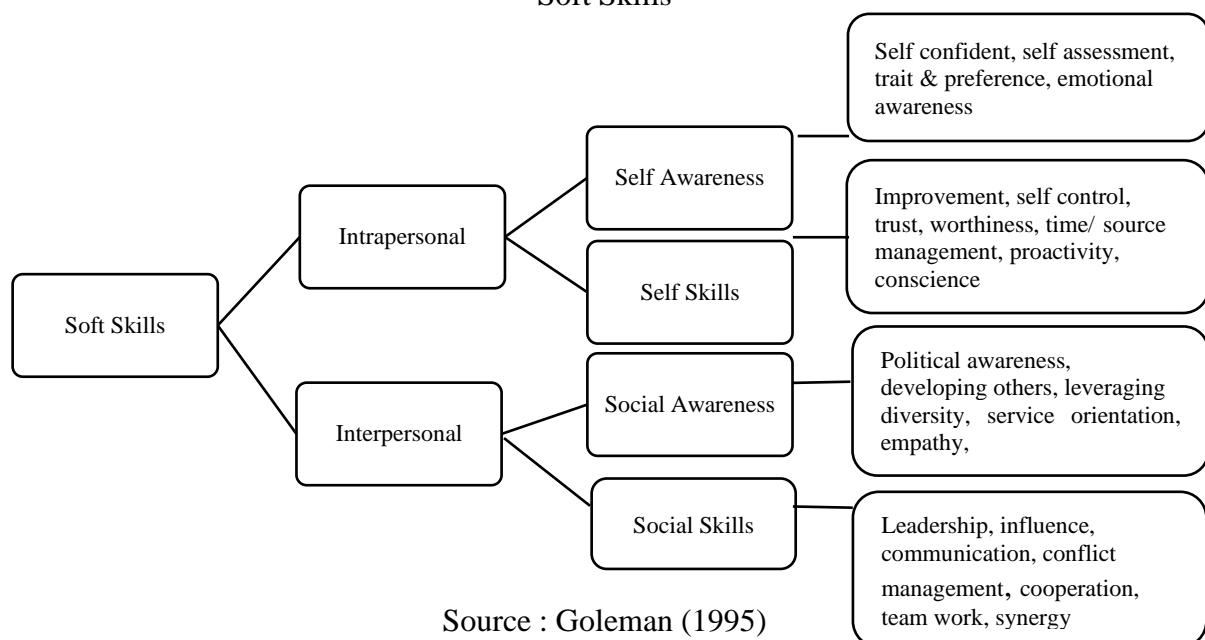
⁴ *ibid*

In a sociological perspective, soft skills are referred to as Emotional Intelligence Quotient [10]. Based on this understanding, the scope of soft skills has been proposed by various experts. Soft skills are related to emotional skills [11], how to communicate, how well they do business presentations, work in teams, and manage time well [12].

Soft skills are competencies that are inherent in a person and are a habit [13]. Soft skills are related to language skills, personal habits, interpersonal skills, managing people, and leadership [14]. Soft Skill refers to various skills, knowledge, and basic life values [15], personal habits, friendliness, and high optimism [16], communicate well, work well, influence others, and get along with other people [17]. By having soft skills, each individual will be able to adapt to the surrounding environment, in this context in the work environment and in a diverse organisational culture and is responsive and proactive to new cultural conditions and situations so that each individual can think clearly, speak and adapt in accordance with the norms that apply in a certain society or country and also applies in the work environment [18].

Bonnie Me Elroy in an article entitled "Why Soft Skills" states that "Soft skills refer to the cluster of personality traits, social graces, facility with language, personal habits friendliness, and optimism that mark people to varying degrees. Soft skills complement hard skills, which are the technical requirements of education" [19]. Broadly speaking, soft skills can be classified into two categories: intrapersonal and interpersonal skills. Intrapersonal skills include: self-awareness (self-confident, self-assessment, trait & preference, emotional awareness) and self-skills (improvement, self-control, trust, worthiness, time / source management, proactivity, conscience). Meanwhile, interpersonal skills include social awareness (political awareness, developing others, leveraging diversity, service orientation, empathy) and social skills (leadership, influence, communication, conflict management, cooperation, team work, synergy) [20].

Figure 1
Soft Skills

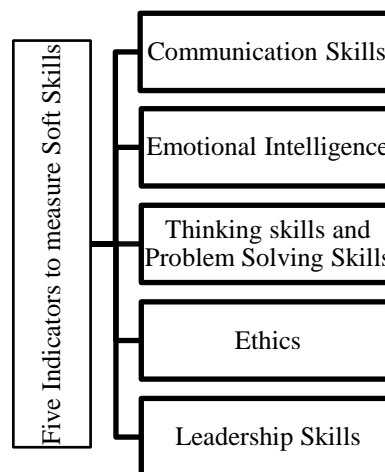


Activeness in the organisation has a positive influence on its members. Based on the results of research conducted by [21] showing the benefits of participating in student or youth organisations. A similar opinion is also shown by the results of research conducted by [22] explaining that students who are active in academic and co-curricular activities have benefits in strengthening thinking skills, communication skills, interpersonal skills, and self-confidence.

Aribowo in [23] states that: "Soft Skills are a person's skills in dealing with other people (including himself). Soft skill attributes, thus include the values adopted, motivation, behaviour, habits, character and attitudes. This attribute of soft skill is owned by each person to varying degrees, influenced by the habit of thinking, saying, acting and behaving. However, this attribute can change if the person concerned wants to change it by practicing to familiarise himself with new things. "

[24] stated: "Soft skills are skills and life skills, both for alone, in groups, or in society as well as with the Creator. Having soft skills will make one's presence even more felt in the community. Communication skills, emotional skills, language skills, group skills, moral and ethical skills, and spiritual skills. Soft Skills are a complement of hard skills (someone's IQ) which is a requirement of a job. Soft skills are skills and life skills, either with oneself, in groups or in society as well as with the Creator. Based on the opinion of several experts, the researchers used the measurement of soft skills proposed by [25]. There are five indicators to measure soft skills: a). Communication skills b). Emotional intelligence c. Thinking and problem solving skills, d. Ethics e. Leadership skills.

Figure 2
Indicators to measure Soft Skills



Source: Sharma (2009)

3. Method

This is a qualitative research with a case study approach. Case studies are qualitative but some are not. As an approach, key case study research makes it possible to investigate a particular event, situation, or social condition and to provide insight into the processes that explain how certain events or situations occur [26]. Furthermore [26] explained that individual, group, community case studies help to show important things of concern, the social processes of society in concrete events, stakeholder experiences.

[27] defines a case study as a research process. “A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the 'case') within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not clearly evident” (p. 16). A research case study aims to examine research questions and problems, which cannot be separated between a phenomenon and the context in which it occurs. [27] divides case studies into explanatory, exploratory, descriptive case studies. Exploratory case studies, fieldwork and data collection can be carried out prior to research questions and hypotheses. This type of research is considered a preliminary study in some social research. However, the research framework has to be drawn up in advance. Preliminary studies are useful for determining the protocol / final sequence used.

Sources of evidence used in data collection come from various sources, [27] suggests that researchers use (1) Documents, which can be letters, memoranda, agendas, administrative documents, newspaper articles, or any documents related to the investigation. (2) Interview, is the most important source. The form of open interviews, where participants comment on certain events, they can propose solutions or provide insight into an event, corroborating evidence from other sources. (3) Direct observations are made during field visits during case studies and are more reliable when carried out by more than one person. In this study, researchers used semi-structured interview techniques. This type of interview is included in the in-depth interview category, where the implementation is freer than structured interviews.

The purpose of this type of interview is to find problems more openly, in which the interviewee is asked for their opinion and ideas. In conducting interviews, researchers need to listen carefully and take notes on what the informants say [28]. For this study, the researcher wanted to see the same case occurring in 3 different organisations. This comparative research falls into the category of descriptive research, whose purpose is to describe and explain phenomena as they are, without intervention from researchers (natural).

In this study, the researcher interviewed 6 cadres from 3 major parties in Indonesia, namely party A, party B, and party C. Researchers needed to interview the cadres of these political parties to find out how the training was carried out in their respective parties. In addition, researchers also interviewed 15 community members consisting of: 5 students, 5 teachers and 5 academics. The data obtained from these community members is very important because it can express their voices about the quality of Indonesian politicians. For ethical issues reasons, the name of the party and the informant were not mentioned in this study.

In data analysis, [27] defined the analysis as "consisting of examining, categorizing, tabulating, testing, or otherwise recombining both quantitative and qualitative evidence to address the initial propositions of a study". [27] recommends categorising the data by categorising the data and then organising the data in four ways, namely pattern matching, building explanations, finding model logic, and performing time-series analysis.

4. Results

The results of interviews with political party cadres and society are summarised in the following excerpt:

Table 1
The results of interviews with political party cadres

Cadres of Political Party (A)	Implementation of Education and Training for cadres	Education and training is carried out in 3 different regions, namely in the district, province and central government. The training provided is more for: Ideology, National insight, Party Vision and Mission, and other materials that have been determined by the Centre for Education and Training. Resource persons were invited from the internal party.
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	Soft Skills Training	Occasionally, training is held related to Motivation and Public Speaking, because Public Speaking is very important for all party cadres. They must appear and speak in front of the public. Resource persons are invited from professionals. Training is carried out incidentally only as needed.
Cadres of Political Party (B)	Implementation of Education and Training for Cadres	As the main condition in the work contract agreement, all party cadres must attend education and training held by the party. The education includes: vision and mission of parties, national insight, The Five Principles ideology, state development, political ethics, the 1945 Constitution, and other materials related to politics. Usually new cadres are very active in participating in training, but cadres who have been party members for several years rarely attend the training. Training is held periodically. Every month there will be training, either only for cadres from the centre, or central and regional.
	Soft Skills Training	Training related to soft skills is also sometimes held, inviting resource persons from professional training centres. The materials include Leadership, Public Speaking, or Motivation.
Cadres of Political Party (C)	Implementation of Education and Training for cadres	As a major party in Indonesia, this party also has training centres in each region, namely the central party secretariat and the regional secretariat. Usually after regional cadres are given education and training in their area, then they will be invited to the centre and join cadres from other regions. So, apart from increasing their knowledge of politics, this training is also an arena to expand and strengthen networks. The materials provided in the training are materials related to the history of parties, the vision and mission of the party, the democratic state, human rights, the environment, The Five Principles ideology, national insight, political ethics and many other materials related to political education.
	Soft Skills Training	For soft skills, we usually include some materials considered necessary for cadres such as communication, leadership and management. Instructors are taken from senior party members, but sometimes from professional training institutions.

Table 2

Results of interviews with community members about the quality of political party cadres

College Students	Politicians are only selfish. They do not have empathy for the people.
	Many politicians are not skilled in communication, especially not understanding that the Indonesian population is very diverse with different cultures and backgrounds, and of course in communicating must also consider these aspects.
	Many politicians are not skilled at solving problems. They can only talk and blame the government without providing a solution.
	Many politicians do not have a leadership spirit. They just want to be leaders who have a lot of followers but don't have leadership skills.
	Many politicians do not have principles to serve the people. As leaders they are more willing to be served.
Suggestions	The behaviour of party cadres reflects the quality of the party itself. Therefore, every political party must provide education and training to its cadres, not only limited to political education, or state defense, but more to the development of EI (Emotional Intelligence) in order to become a more qualified person and have high morality.



Academicians	Many members of the parliament do not have the ability in Intercultural Communication skills, even though they should understand that Indonesia consists of various ethnic groups, languages and religions. For this reason, communication should pay attention to these aspects so as not to offend certain groups.
	During the campaign period, the candidates were busy carrying lots of aid packages, but after becoming members of the Council, they were very arrogant and difficult to find.
	At present, many cadres of political parties who are already board members do not have ethics. Several council members were involved in pornography cases and even domestic violence.
	Many legislators do not have empathy for the people. In the midst of a difficult situation, these politicians demanded that their office space be renovated and completed with sports facilities, including a swimming pool.
	Many cadres of political parties currently have high academic degrees. They have Masters or Doctoral Degrees. However, many of them have to be in prison for corruption cases.
Suggestions	It is very urgent for Soft Skills training to be carried out for cadres of political parties so that they have empathy for the people, are ethical and have morals. The training material provided should not only be in the form of technical training on drafting laws, or strategies for discussion with constituents in the regions, but the training should be aimed more at improving the attitudes and behaviour of political party cadres so that they become more qualified leaders who serve the people and not being served.
Guru	When making a law, members of the parliament often do not side with the people, which causes the people to have to demonstrate.
	Currently, the parliament's performance is very poor, especially during the pandemic. Board members did not focus on discussing how to overcome COVID 19, but discussed a series of controversial bills instead.
	A number of policies taken are not correct. The parliament even adopted a policy of ordering COVID 19 herbal medicines from China, even though in Indonesia we have many sources of herbal medicines.
	There is a receipt of money or goods or a promise from a party outside the Council to include a policy according to the request for the interest of that party into the legislation being discussed.
	Many cadres of political parties ask for a share / commission / fee from the results of cooperation with third parties, including in the procurement and / or sale of goods and services that should go to the state / regional treasury.
Suggestions	To get qualified cadres of political parties, of course, it must start from the recruitment system. In general, in recruiting new party cadres, only funding is concerned. Who can provide large funds used for campaign and party interests, he will be accepted. In addition to the recruitment system that must be improved, the training system for cadres must also be more focused on soft skills so that they can build character and better quality personalities, so that there will be no more corrupt politicians, who do not have empathy for the people, who are unethical, and do not have assertive leadership skills.

5. Discussion

From the analysis above, it is known that the three major parties in Indonesia have education and training centres, both at the central and regional levels. Only if it is examined more deeply, in general, the three parties put their main materials in training related to theories about politics, not to improve the quality of each cadre so that they become politicians who have high Emotional Intelligence. In the interviews conducted by researchers, the three cadres ranked soft skills training as "second in line", and were considered only as a support for the

political material provided. The materials provided are also general materials such as leadership, public speaking, and motivation. In fact, to change attitudes and behaviour, there are still many aspects that must be given to cadres, namely those related to interpersonal communication and interpersonal communication.

The results of interviews with community members indicate that the quality of political party cadres is still very poor, both in intrapersonal and interpersonal skills. Regarding interpersonal problems, it turned out that all interviewed participants said that political party cadres did not have empathy for the people, even a number of policies were made that were not in favour of the people [20], [25].

““Until now, the behaviour of council members who are cadres of political parties is very bad. This can be seen from the way they make laws that are more pro to entrepreneurs than to the common people, the excessive demand for sports facilities to be provided in the parliament building, and they even ask for a swimming pool to be provided. Their income is already very large. They are paid using public money, but their performance is not optimal. In fact, many of them slept when the meeting to discuss people's issues was taking place. The question now is whether they as cadres are not equipped with previous education or training, especially in relation to soft skills to improve their attitudes and behaviour as cadres of political parties that lead this nation.” (YG-college student).

Meanwhile, the participants with academic backgrounds also explained that the members of the council who are cadres of political parties have very low interpersonal skills. They do not have the ability to communicate between cultures even though they know that Indonesia has a very diverse nation, with different ethnic groups, local languages and various religions. With their limitations, their way of resolving conflicts between community groups is questionable [20] and [25].

“There have been conflicts between groups several times, such as conflicts between tribes in Sampit (Kalimantan), conflicts between religions (Islam and Christianity) in Ambon (Maluku), conflicts between ethnic groups (native and non-native / Chinese). Whenever there is a conflict, representatives of the conflicting people meet the representatives of the people. However, it is very unfortunate that the representatives of the people do not have conflict management and good thinking skills, so that the existing problems are not resolved with a win-win solution. In addition, there are many things that are degrading to the people's representatives at this time. All Indonesian people already know about it because this had gone viral, when a member of the council was in the middle of a meeting about the people, instead watching pornographic videos in the courtroom, and several other council members related to an affair case. This shows that they do not have ethics as representatives of the people and do not have Emotional Intelligence or Emotional Awareness. ” (IK - Academician)

Meanwhile, interviews with 5 teachers indicated that cadres of political parties do not have empathy. This is evidenced by, among others, if they make laws, the members of the council often do not side with the people, which causes the people to have to demonstrate. Even in a pandemic like now, they should as people's representatives think about how to best handle COVID 19, but they instead discussed a controversial bill.

““Currently, there are many cadres of political parties who have masters or doctor degrees but have to go to prison for cases of bribery or corruption. They seem not ashamed anymore to commit illegal acts. These cadres cannot be ideal leaders because they only want to be served, and do not have a service orientation. The training system for party cadres should be more focused on soft skills in order to build character and higher quality personalities, so that there are no more politicians who are corrupt and do not have empathy for the little people. ”

From the interviews conducted by researchers, it was found that the EQ of these cadres was still very low, even though academically they had masters or doctoral degrees. It is very worrying if the cadres of political parties only prioritize IQ (hard skills) with their academic degrees but do not have a good EQ. Having soft skills will make one's presence even more felt

in the community. Communication skills, emotional skills, language skills, group skills, moral and ethical skills, and spiritual skills. Soft Skills are a complement of hard skills (one's IQ) which is a requirement of a job [24].

6. Conclusion

The results of this study indicate that the cadres of political parties in Indonesia currently do not have high quality. They are still not capable of interpersonal and interpersonal skills. Therefore, Intrapersonal skills are mainly related to emotional intelligence and ethical issues. Meanwhile, the low quality of interpersonal skills can be seen from the ability to communicate, thinking skills and problem solving skills, and leadership skills. For this reason, it is highly recommended that political parties make education and training programs that are more planned by giving priority to training that can increase Emotional Intelligence and not rely solely on academic abilities. For future research, researchers suggest that research on education and training for cadres of political parties should be carried out with a different approach.

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