EXPLORING LEADERSHIP DIMENSION AMONG ORGANIZATIONS (THE ANALYSIS AGAINST LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE BASED ON CULTURAL AND ETHNICAL BACKGROUNDS IN INDONESIA)

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ABSTRACT

Research uses confirmatory factor analysis involving Excellent Leader Scale with characteristics measuring excellent leadership. These characteristics reflect what leaders/managers experience in organization when they perform their responsibilities. Excellent Leader Scale contains several items such as Organizational Demand (OD), Personal Qualities (PQ), Managerial Behavior (MB) and Environmental Influence (EI).

Confirmatory factor analysis is carried out to attest whether Excellent Leader Scale with eight leadership characteristics has shown higher level of leadership. T-test is conducted to examine different constructs underlying leadership excellence among leaders. The respondent of research is the leaders in business organization and public/governmental organization.

Result of research indicates that the leaders are maintaining the distinctive leadership behaviors based on ethnical identity, especially Indonesia local wisdom.

Keywords: *leadership dimension, leadership excellence, ethnic and culture.*

Introduction:

The historical, sosiological, and cultural facts have proven that Indonesia consists of a number of ethnic groups, cultures, religions, etc. The reality makes Indonesia a country which is made of multicultural societies. This phenomenon cannot be separated from the geographical condition of Indonesia that stands on a point where two oceans meet and two continents face each other. Therefore, there have been various impacts brought to every aspect of live in Indonesia. The impacts have mostly resulted from imperialism. In addition, trading that existed long time ago are also factors which contribute to the phenomenon. History has proven that Indonesia has been colonized by the Netherland, Portugal, and Japan who also carried out their values to Indonesia. The stories in the past have recorded that marchants from Indonesia established a bussines relationship with some merchants from other countries, such as Gujarat (India), China and Saudi Arabia.

An acculturation of culture has appeared as a result of the interaction between the imperialism and also trading. This acculturation of culture brings together the local values and cultures with other values and cultures such as Islamic, Confucianism, Hinduism and Taoism..

Such cultural richness provides a vast background in understanding the effect of culture on the practice of organizational life and managerial system in Indonesia. Leadership model and practice are usually adopted from Western leadership theories (United States, Europe) and also Asian neighbors (Japan and China). It implies that Indonesia does not have a model to arrange or to lead an organization. If deeply reviewed, local wisdom throughout Indonesia may contain various leadership models that may be suitable to modern organization.

Lack of knowledge and recognition about leadership model in Indonesia local wisdom may give bad impact on various governmental and private organizations. Several conflicts can occur, such as the superior-subordinate conflict which culminates with strike, the rampant of corruption that destroys ethics and morality, the embezzlement of tax, the abuse of power at various public agencies, including banking, police, attorney, justice and parliament. Conflict of interest, corruption case and poverty are the issues broadcasted widely by any media.

National identity of Indonesia does not yet have leadership model that deeply rooted into Indonesia culture. Therefore, *inferior syndrome* (sense of disempowerment) is quite contagious among decision-makers. Less self-confidence to introduce genuine culture may erode national identity. One step to prevent this erosion is by exploring local wisdoms.

The approaches and natures of leadership research are always evolving. Four dimensions are recognized to define leadership excellence, respectively *Organizational Demand* (OD), *Personal Qualities* (PQ), *Managerial Behavior* (MB) and *Environmental Influence* (EI). These dimensions provide the cultural insight about leadership values that emphasize on orderliness and punctuality. West literatures represent these values greater than the values of consultative, paternalistic and democratic that may characterize leadership researches with eastern tradition.

Octavianus (2007) assert that, Indonesia's current symptoms of the crisis of leadership in various organizations. One indicator is the increasing lack of leaders with character in providing security to its employees/followers. He further said that leaders in Indonesia no longer have an identity as well as the erosion of moral and ethical. On the other hand research findings of Sahertian (2008) showed that the organizational culture and the different business orientation, leadership behavior influence on the performance showed different results. Based on the opinions it can be concluded that the leaders of character and values will greatly affect the culture and work culture leads

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) involving *Excellent Leader Scale* is performed in this research. This *Excellent Leader Scale* contains several items such as *Organizational Demand*, *Personal Qualities*, *Managerial Behavior* and *Environmental Influence* as suggested by (Selvarajah et al., 1995).

Review of Literatures:
Leadership Excellence:

Research about leadership has evolved using various paradigms and searching for leadership characteristics (House and Aditya, 1997; Yukl, 1989). Although Plato is still the main thinker who influences western conception of leadership, other leadership contributors have made significant impact. Some of them use classical, contemporary and critical approaches to leadership (Grint, 1997). The currently used approaches include charismatic leadership (Conger and Kanungo, 1987), transactional and transformational leaderships (Bass and Avolio, 1990) and servant leadership (Spears, 2010). This research attempts to review the understanding of leadership which is more sensitive to the culture than previous reviews.

The relational principles among humans are very essential in the plural community where leaders must deal with people with various backgrounds, either in culture, ethnic or religion. To be more effective, leaders must have multicultural understanding which admit that managerial dimensions in east and west sides of the world can exist and also influence the perception of leadership excellence in Indonesia.

Hofstede is considered highly contributive to cultural research. However, this research is not using four cultural dimensions suggested by Hofstede (1980) and long-term orientation proposed by Bond (1988). Both researches have given a cultural framework for general community. Niffenegger, Kulvitwat, and Engchanil (2006) assert that a nation must have a distinctive marker, and therefore, assessing the culture of a nation with Hofstede's cultural dimensions may not be reliable.

A group of researchers from six ASEAN countries (Brunei, Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippine, Singapore and Thailnand) explores the leadership questions by making categories. The category is based on balancing the international perspective rather than instrument with western literature. Four categories are identified, respectively *Personal Qualities*, *Managerial Behavior*, *Organizational Demand* and *Environmental Influence* (Selvarajah et al, 1995).

Based on the fact that Indonesian people are multicultural, people from various ethnics with their own ethnic group can have their self-identity and culture, and they can live and stay in relatively harmonious way (Endraswara, 2013). Although Indonesia has different religions with their different ritual and symbolical expressions, "their common similarity is that their values are deeply rooted among the believers". According to (Sibarani, 2013, p. 22), the values such as respect to parent, collective orientation, harmony, care toward face saving, intimacy and religious orientation.

Hofstede (1991), in this research, asserts that people in Asia, particularly Indonesia, have higher power distance, lower individualism, moderate masculinity, and relatively weaker risk avoidance if compared to other countries. This observation implies that Asian people, especially Indonesians, have positioned *organizational demand* as the most important of all four dimension, and thus, this dimension has the strongest effect on organizational wellbeing.

Some researchers have examined cultural contextualization across many countries (Karande et.al., 2002; Kennedy, 2002; Saufi et.al., 2002; Lim, 2001; Gupta and Sulaiman, 1996; Hofstede, 1991). Javidan, Dorfman, de Luque, and House (2006) explained that cultural contextualization is considered as important because culture always colors every aspect of human behavior. Therefore, the knowledge about culture and its effect are very useful for executives who work in an environment of multicultural business (Javidan et.al. 2006). Most researches that emphasize on the aspect of nationality do not see the national sub-population as the contributor to managerial values.

Kennedy (2002) in GLOBE Study under Malaysia context, with title "Leadership in Malaysia", seems misinterpreting the values of Malay indigenous peoples as the substitute to Malaysia managerial values. A GLOBE study result ignores the role and contribution of the Chinese and Indians in Malaysia against the leadership style in Malaysia. The study provides a historical context, economic and social studies based research culture in Malaysia. In various countries in Southeast Asia, certain ethnic groups are sufficiently powerful and some opinions assert that this power influences the perception of leadership values (Selvarajah and Meyer, 2008).

Karande et.al. (2002) attempted to examine the cross-cultural moral philosophies among marketing managers in the United States, Australia and Malaysia, but their research failed to explain the effect of sub-culture. Anurit (2012) admitted that many researches overemphasize national dimension and understate local population. Local wisdom is to be considered as the shaper of leadership/managerial values which are actually undermined. The current research, thus, tries to ensure whether local wisdom value can support the establishment of leadership quality based on leadership excellence theory suggested by Selvarajah et.al. (1995).

Ethnicity and Leadership in Indonesia:

Organizational structure in Indonesia comprises of leaders from various ethnical backgrounds. In governmental organizations, it is easy to can find leaders from Java, Batak, Bali, Makassar, Ambon, Kalimantan, Minang and various localities. In private organizations, leaders from Chinese, Arabic, and Indian ethnic, and also indigenous peoples, are quite evident. According to Swierczek (1991) , there are three leadership styles that distinguished from cultural background. These are East Asian Style, South Asian Style and Southeast Asian Style.

(1) *East Asian Style*. This style originates from Japan, China and Korea. There is a differentiation between participative and directive approaches. Misumi (quoted by Swierczek, 1991) finds that in various situations, democratic style is more

effective when the assignment is easily performed, and autocratic style is more suitable for the difficult assignment.

(2) *South Asian Style*. This style develops well in India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The management is hesitant to consult with subordinates and preferring for delegating the discretion to subordinates. Leaders are paternalistic and eager to interfere with the privacy of subordinates. South Asian leadership style is considered as distant, directive and paternal.

(3) *Southeast Asian Style*. It associates with ASEAN countries. Hofsede category is quite apparent in this region. Companies tend to adopt authoritarian managerial style which is consistent to the fact that managers love conformity and regularity/ orderliness.

The categorization of Asia leadership by Swierczek (1991) may help explaining the cultural domains practiced throughout Indonesia management. Classifying Indonesia as the country with distinctive leadership style may not be proper because of ethnical diversity in this country. Chin (2002) recalls that when dealing with plural communities, like Indonesia, "leaders must acknowledge cultural difference that characterize each community". For instance, recent studies (Prajayanti, 2012; Elfira, 2013) has conceded that local wisdom values are becoming optional for leaders in performing their leadership style. Ahmad Saufi (2002) has found that indigenous managers withMalaysian and Indian ethnicity, do like participative leadership style more whereas Chinese ethnic managers prefer more onto delegation style.Focus of this research will be given upon two groups of leaders, respectively Chinese ethnic leaders and indigenous leaders.

Chinese Indonesian is the descendant of the refugees who arrived Indonesia from China towards the end of the nineteenth century. China, at that time, remained under the control of warlord general with feudalistic life style in which smallholders suffered a lot. Those who preferred to live as refugees in many parts of the world counted for 55 million heads with the wealth reaching for 2 or 3 TrillionUS dollar in 1988. Despite great number of refugees, China now becomes the biggest third economic in the world after United States and Japan (Chen, 2003). To put that into perspective, the world's millionaires have more combined wealth than the entire productive output of the Chinese economy, which was $8.3 trillion in 2012. It's roughly three times the output of the entire U.S. economy. According to FORBES estimates, China had 157 billionaires in 2013

(http://www.forbes.com/sites/kenrapoza/2014).

Chinese people who have left the country and did not come back, they still maintain the traditions of their ancestors. Therefoe the Chinese expatriates are the conserver of ancient traditional China legacies.

Chinese Indonesians, especially who originated from Quandong, Fujian and HainanProvinces, are familiar with several dialects such as Kanton, Fuzhou, Hainan, Hakka, Henghua, Hokchia, Hokkien, and Teochiu (Pan, 1999). Most of them are professing Confucianism, Taoism or Buddhism, and inheriting a culture "that is virtually undefeatable for almost 2,500 years" (Taormina and Selvarajah, 2005).

By respecting to Confucius values, Tsui et al (2004) identifed four dimensions of China leadership: (1) being creative and taking the risk, (2) making a relation and communication; (3) articulating vision; (4) showing good deed; (5) monitoring the operation; and (6) being authoritative, respectively. The importance of managerial behavior is quite clear in most of these dimensions. More detailed discussion about Confucius philosophy in leadership can be seen in Waley (1989) and Taormina and Selvarajah (2005).

In contrast with Confucius and Mencius, Taoism clarifies that leading people through a simple life and natural behavior will facilitate the work of natural order (Wah, 2002). In relative to leadership, Lao Tze, the founder of Taoism teaching, believes that a leader must play the role as facilitator who facilitates the process through the group rather than managing the process alone (Heider, 1994). A wise leader will follow the path with the least disputes to lead the organization to the goal. Lao Tze writes that,harder the push given by leaders, stronger the inversion responded by the system. This view supports the fact that *managerial behavior* is one important aspect of leadership excellence. This attribute also sets out the importance of persuasive force.

Chinese cultural legacies, for centuries are preserved by Chinese in foreign countries, including those who live in Indonesia. Chinese Indonesian may be the minority but they control the most economic wheels of Indonesia. Mastery and control of ethnic Chinese on the Indonesian economy seen from the absolute majority of ethnic Chinese on the list of richest people of Indonesia from 1998 to 2013 where over 90% of 10, 100 or 1000 Indonesia's richest man is a conglomerate of ethnic Chinese (Forbes, 2013). Chinese population is only 5% of the total population of Indonesia but it controls over 75% of the economy in Indonesia. The command and control of ethnic Chinese in the Indonesian economy at the present time (2014), estimated to exceed 80% of the Indonesian economy (http://yudisamara.org/2014). Their influence on leadership style at Indonesian business sector is quite significant. This argument stresses upon the importance of persuasive force that based on leader's behavior, strong sense and trust.

Indonesian, particularly indigenous peoples, are respecting their cultural values and submissive to the custom. Most Indonesians live harmonious with the nature, respect social and religious moralities, and develop harmonious interpersonal relation and good communication.

This concept is quite intrinsic to Indonesian culture which means that Indonesian is shy, non-confrontational, adaptive and eager to defend their posture of attitude. They believe in a hierarchical relation, do willing to accept the unequal relationship, and recognize the authority between old and young, or superior and subordinate. Respecting the older or those with authority is greatly emphasized. Building a relationship based on morality and trust may need highly contextual communication in which verbal and situational variables around the communication must be considered. Santoso (2013) identified there are five positive value of the ideal leadership qualities, namely wisdom, justice, love, nature outwardly attractive and courage for the sake of self-esteem

Social sensitivity and shyness concepts are closely related with individual wellbeing in group and family contexts. The ability to see the development of individuals or groups in comprehensive way is concerned with the understanding of material and spiritual dimensions. Loyalty to the group, emotional interdependence, and harmonious relation with others, will provide a signification to the existence of a person at social context. In evaluating the performance and behavior, both personal and professional qualities are important. Indonesians believe in the existence of One Supreme God. This commitment is represented into their daily life which manifests as collective pray and collective ritual to worship the God.

The searching for knowledge from sacred scripture is very important to Indonesian. It is said that the life must be filled with the effort to meet the worldwide necessity but still be complying with religious teaching. This value comes to front within daily behavior. Morality is always inherited from the ancestor. Morality signalizes everyone to have rational and sensitive manners to others' intuition (feeling). The balance between rational mindset and feeling is morality, and therefore, morality represents a statement or manifestation of friendliness.

Indonesian is a sensitive individual who loves living in harmony and friendly ways with community members. These values are referred to *Personal Qualities* in Leadership Excellence.

Based on above review, some hypotheses are proposed:

H1: *Leadership Excellence* can be used to perceive anything that can develop someone into excellent leader.

H2: The most influential dimension to create leadership excellence among leaders/managers is *Organizational Demand*.

H3: There is no different constructs that underlie leadership excellence between indigenous leaders and Chinese ethnic leaders.

Research Methodology:

The sample of this research is the leader in the private defense organization and government in Malang, amounting to 100 respondents. The number of questionnaires returned was 65 and that can be analyzed by 63 respondents.This research uses a measurement scale, called *Excellent Leader* (EL) *Scale*, containing of several items such as *Personal Qualities* (PQ), *Managerial Behavior* (MB), *Organizational Demand* (OD), and *Environmental Influence* (EI) as suggested by Selvarajah et al (1995). To attest the proposed hypotheses and to determine discriminant validity of attributes in *Excellent Leader Scale*, then Confirmatory Factor Analysis is used to ensure that the derivation is right (Hair et al, 1998). *Confirmatory Factor Analysis* is used to examine the structural factor of the scale. T-test is conducted to attest whether there is different construct underlying excellent leadership among leaders. To analyze the data in this study used SPSS V.18.

Results:

The result of factor analysis shows the load rate of factor in each variable that makes up *Excellent Leader* variable. The highest factor load is found in variable X1 (*Organizational Demand*) with 0.909. It means that it is the variable with the most dominant effect on *Excellent Leader* and also indicates that it is the most important quality that must be owned by *Excellent Leader*. Three other variables also give significant contribution to the variable *Excellent Leader*.

Based on this result, all variables in the scale have good reliability based on Cronbach Alpha. Internal validity of the variables is also good as indicated by Confirmatory Factor Analysis. The modification index indicates that variables are showing reliable discriminant validity because each statement has higher load for some specific constructs than others. All correlations are significant above one percent, and the average rate is high for all variables indicating that all dimensions are considered as important to a leader.

T-test is performed on two sample groups to acknowledge whether there is significant difference between total score averages of each variable observed on Chinese ethnic leaders and indigenous leaders.

Result of analysis indicates that t-count is 2.119 with significance level of 0.038. Because t-count is higher than t-table (2.119 > 2.000) and significance level is smaller than alpha (0.038 < 0.05), it means that there is significant difference between Chinese ethnic leaders and indigenous leaders on variable *Organizational Demand*. Result of analysis for variable *Personal Qualities* has obtained t-count for 1.729 with significance level of 0.089. Because t-count is lower than t-table (1.729 < 2.000) and significance level is higher than alpha (0.089 > 0.05), there is no significant

difference on this variable between Chinese ethnic leaders and indigenous leaders.

Result of analysis on variable *Environmental Influence* shows that t-count is 1.332 with significance level of 0.188. Because t-count is lower than t-table (1.332 < 2.000) and significance level is bigger than alpha (0.188 > 0.05), it means that there is no significant difference between Chinese ethnic leaders and indigenous leaders on this variable. Result of analysis for variable *Managerial Behavior* has obtained t-count for 2.495 with significance level of 0.015. Because t-count is higher than t-table (2.495 > 2.000) and significance level is lower than alpha (0.015 < 0.05), there is a significant difference on this variable between Chinese ethnic leaders and indigenous leaders.

Table: Result of t-Test

variable	t-statistic	t-value	significancy	description
X1	2.119	2.000	0.038	significant
X2	1.729	2.000	0.089	non-significant
X3	1.332	2.000	0.188	non-significant
X4	2.495	2.000	0.015	significant

Pursuant to all these results, it is concluded that there is a significant difference between Chinese ethnic leaders and indigenous leaders on the variables of *Organizational Demand* and *Managerial Behavior*. Meanwhile, there is no significant difference between Chinese ethnic leaders and indigenous leaders on variables of *Personal Qualities* and *Environmental Influence*.

As stated in hypothesis, *Organizational Demand* is the most important dimension for *Excellent Leader* among indigenous leaders, whereas *Managerial Behavior* is the most important dimension for *Excellent Leader* among Chinese ethnic leaders/managers. It is indeed contrasting with expectation that *Managerial Behavior* is more important than *Personal Qualities* among indigenous managers. Interestingly, Chinese ethnic leaders give lower value than indigenous leaders on *Personal Qualities* and *Organizational Demand*.

Discussion:

This research attempts to extend the boundary of leadership theories by examining the sub-cultures of leadership under Indonesian ethnical background. Indonesia is a multicultural country inhabited by many tribes which develop different attitudes and behaviors to leadership dimensions. Multiculturalism is contrasting with assimilation. This research gives significant contribution to the development of cultural diversity management. Indonesia is a country with dramatic economic development which keeps it attractive to direct investment from abroad.

The perception about an *Excellent Leader* within Indonesia organizations includes various dimensions such as *Managerial Behavior*, *Environmental Influence*, *Organizational Demand* and *Personal Qualities* as proposed by Selvarajah et.al. (1995).

Confirmatory Factor Analysis indicates that four dimensions including *Managerial Behavior*, *Environmental Influence*, *Organizational Demand* and *Personal Qualities* are closely related to the construction of *Excellent Leader*. Result of analysis also shows that *Organizational Demand* is the most important dimension among Indonesian organizational leaders.

This research also gives some information about the cultural difference in relative with the perception of leadership excellence. Mencius's statement on leadership suggests that Chinese ethnic managers shall attend to *Managerial Behavior* (persuasive orientation) and consider it as the most important dimension. It shall be noted that *Personal Qualities* is less important than *Organizational Demand* among leaders/managers.

Departing from this understanding, how shall Indonesia leaders/managers to lead their subordinates in the best way? Leaders understand their followers. Factors that influence Indonesian behavior, their personality, organizational demand and environment, must be taken into account in assessing their performance at workplace context. Indigenous workers from various tribes/ethnics, traditions, histories and social systems, are quite different because it is shaped by religion. Senses of kinship and family-centrism must be integrated into an organization. The best leaders/managers are demanding loyalty and trust, and also ensuring that the demand of people must be met. Factors that make up *Organizational Demand* must be recognized and respected.

Leaders must aware the motivation behind such dimension because it is the implicit cultural meaning of Indonesian. For example, peoples in the collectivist country tend to emphasize social demand from of more individualistic ego whereas self-actualization is apparently underscored in countries, including United States (Adler, 2002).

Chinese ethnic leaders/managers and indigenous leaders/managers have given greater emphasis on *Organizational Demand* which stresses onto factors such as productivity, professionalism, collective support, and team coherence. Historical, social and cultural factors are also contributive to managerial method of Indonesia. In this context, leadership must be understood based on Indonesia position as multicultural country. By understanding the cultural background of Indonesia, it will give a meaningful base to understand Indonesia leadership.

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