

Success Factors of National Leadership in Indonesia

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Abstract: This study aims to know some of the factors that determine the success of leadership in Indonesia which is associated between Indonesian leaders with his/her competence, communication skills, crisis handling and how its aspects will determine his leadership and national performance or organizational performance in nation-state context. This study will also aims to discover how selection can be done objectively and could factor in differences in national leadership and national performance as then the leadership processes in this country may not only be attributed and be the responsibility of the leaders but also the responsibility of the selection process and its assorted people that is involved in the selection process. Some of the concepts in a comprehensive manner will be described as a proposed conceptual model as contribution in achieving better performance for the government.

Key words: Leadership, competence, communication skill, performance, conceptual

INTRODUCTION

In nation-states concept, a nation is a vast organization with its structures and its key components. One of the important components are its shareholders, the citizens of that country. On the other hand, another important components are the one who is running the country which is the government. The government as the “caretaker” of the country have sets of hierarchy and leaders which puts a leader on the top. In democratic country, the leaders of the country is the President, assisted by vice president.

As the era of globalization rolls by changes are needed in every nation to keep their nation competitive, keep their nation performing well and ensure that the shareholders of the nation, the Indonesian people have the most benefit as possible. As in organization, the main goal of the organization is to give maximum benefit to its shareholders, the nation as an organization also have the goal to bring total benefit or maximum benefit to Indonesian people or citizens of Indonesia.

Some important things that need to be done on them are starting from the selection process of candidates that objective and in accordance with the area to be occupied also have competence in their field also certainly possessed strong leadership because at the time they are expected as a replacement for existing leaders when they retire. As future leaders also need the ability to communicate well and effectively as preparation when the time comes they have to solve the problem, so as to have the ability to cope appropriately and wisely. Some of the

concepts in a comprehensive manner I will describe in the next section as a proposed conceptual model as contribution in achieving better performance for the government.

Literature review

Leadership: The first aspect to determine about Indonesian leadership itself is examining the definition of leadership and to what extent it is needed and applied in Indonesian context and how moderating values that are apparent in Indonesia be applied. Wendt *et al.* (2009) argues that there are 2 types of leadership which we will see how this will affect Indonesia. According to Wendt *et al.* (2009) the 2 types of leadership are as follows.

Directive leadership: The task oriented behaviors that the leader will have strong influence in discussion and decision making, dominate interaction and will direct task completion personally. The directive leadership leaders will often engage in personal direction to complete objectives (Burke *et al.*, 2006).

Supportive leadership: The type of leadership that is directed to satisfy the needs of its subordinates including welfare and creating a friendly and psychologically good interaction. Directive leadership is a type of leadership that prefers direct orders and direct ways and usually forbids intervention changes innovation from the one that is getting the directive order. Directive leadership are usually prevalent in Eastern type of leadership that

prefers direct orders (Groddeck, 2011). As more personal direction and personal stake is involved, the leaders will affect more final performance as the people will tend to look up to the leader for direction.

Supportive leadership is a type of leadership that don't place the leader much in the limelight and thus focus on distributing the delegation of the job to its subordinates (Wendt *et al.*, 2009) but the leader will be monitoring and supporting the subordinates in completing the task or the job. In this type of leadership on the national context, it is inferred that supportive leadership leaders prefers not to gets attention to his works but prefers that his subordinates such as his departments in presidential election gets the limelight credits that are due.

The question is not to define which leadership is good or bad because both are needed. Too much directive leadership and lacks of delegation of duties to his subordinates will risk that the subordinates will depend too much on him. What will be beneficial of Indonesia is to have supportive and genuine supportive leadership. Leaders should only engage in directive leadership at times because directive leadership takes time, costs money and could make the people too dependent and in effect will not develop its subordinates. The other approach to leadership in a national-context is to explore the perspective of the national leadership as argued by Bolden and Kirk (2009). Bolden argues that there are 4 perspective of national leadership.

Essentialist: Is a approach that takes broad objectives on measuring leadership of the nation as what has been done by the leaders to its followers which is the citizens of the nation itself. This is the most basic view (Bolden and Kirk, 2009) and is dominant until the 1970s. Essentialists perspective argues that the good leadership came from the personal qualities of the leaders himself which in turn will turns out translated to actions by the leaders.

Relational: Is the approach that takes account on how good the leaders is relating to others, how the leader affects social changes such as ideologies. On this perspective, the leaders are not recognized for his own characteristics but be concerned as a whole.

Critical: Critical perspective is a somewhat different perspective that refuses to acknowledge leadership as a proper concept of leading a nation but takes approach to unmask that the "true" leadership are power and politics within a nation itself and "leadership" according to the critical theorist are only taken to enhance the unequal distribution of power.

Constructionist: Constructionist is a value that draws attention so that the people/citizens will discover their own predicament or their own condition, creating leadership not as a leader only but a force of logic-making or sense-making. An essentialist dimension is still prevalent for use in Indonesia, this is evident in selection process where the election candidate is always highlighting past success and past works. Essentialist dimension is also closely related to culture, as essentialist dimension is stated to stem from the personal qualities of the leader itself which may came from his/her characters (Bolden and Kirk, 2009). A challenge to the essentialist dimension is that superior character may not always be translated to superior performance (Bolden and Kirk, 2009) though in the same light Bolden also argues that a superior personal characteristics may also be translated to superior activity. Bolden is noting that although superior activity may stem from superior personal characteristics, it may not always result in superior performance.

A relationship dimension is also related to culture as culture will also define method of communication, define method of transmitting and receiving information and culture is also affecting how people will evaluate the communication itself. A relational dimension view is viewing the leaders not as per their characteristics but stipulating that a leader's characters will be reflected by his way of communication thus evaluating leaders characters fully from communication and dismissing other factors. A challenge to the dimension of relationship is that there are some traits that may hamper a leader's ability or coherence while communicating while not really puts his character is negativity but on the other hand, communication itself could be tampered meaning that communication itself may not wholly be a reflection of the leader characters but may be tampered by hidden agenda, propaganda and many other things that will distort or even change the reflection of the characters thus making the communication of the said leaders are not reflecting his character.

A critical dimension is not talking about the leadership but talking about individuals outside the leadership that are critical to the leadership itself. While essentialist and relationship dimension discuss about the leader or the characteristics of the leader or the characteristics of a set of individuals which are forming up the national leadership, critical dimension is some what different which discuss about the outside political power that is playing the leader or the national leadership. This is usually a dimension that is viewed not by the national leadership itself but a dimension or perspective held by the nationals of the particular nation. The people of Indonesia itself. A leader should be able to engage its followers the people of Indonesia. As a follower, the

primary thing for the leaders to do is to establish his leadership by asserting its leadership over Indonesian followers. Furthermore, the leaders should also be able to have Indonesian characteristics or characteristics that is identified at by its followers because followers will follow leaders that embody the values of the group that they strongly identify (Collinson, 2006). Collinson also argues that leadership depends on group members sharing a consensual social identity and leaders is able to construct these shared identity. Kean added that apart from shared identity, followers and leaders could also takes effect on the social construction of the leadership itself. The other classic approach to leadership is the 3 way of leadership styles such as autocratic, laissez au faire and democratic (Groenewald *et al.*, 2005).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Leadership and communication: One of the defining characters of leadership is that it should be able to communicate with other people and should be able to send a message that is correctly conveyed to other people (Conger, 1991). Argues that leaders should be able to create intrinsic value of himself by doing a good communication with the other people. While communication is done by humans as simple as a human gesture like talking and speaking, there are factors that will inhabit a good communication for example grogginess and lack of self confidence (Conger, 1991).

The inability to communicate will be seen as negative light by the Indonesian people because as Conger argued people will determine that the said leader lacks self confidence and therefore is lacking in its capabilities to lead the nation. Furthermore, lack of communication could also make the subjects the Indonesian citizens will continuously fails to identify them as Indonesians and will fail to identify the said leader as the leader of the Indonesian people as evidenced in Bartels *et al.* (2010)'s research that concludes that a failure of vertical communication by leaders inside organization will strongly reduce the ability of the subordinates to identify themselves in the organization. Further more, a good communication is the basic building block of social systems (Groddeck, 2011) so that Indonesia as a social system that consists of Indonesian citizens must also be built up by the grounds of communication.

Leadership in multi-cultural context: After communication, the leadership factors in Indonesia will also requires ability to manage across cultures. Studies about multi-cultural leadership is quite complex (Bolden and Kirk, 2009) though it is already been taken. In a sense, a leader should be able to build cohesiveness which in turn will depend on what is the leadership style

of the leader himself or herself (Collinson, 2006; Putri, 2015; Rijal, 2016). The need for a concern that the leaders should be able to bring in team cohesiveness (Collinson, 2006) is because Indonesia is a multi-cultural country and leading a multi-cultured organization requires a different contextual approaches (Bolden and Kirk, 2009).

Crisis management: A management of crisis ability is necessary for leaders to protect core societal values, critical infrastructure and the citizens of the nation itself. Boyatzis (2008) the traits that are needed by the leaders of Indonesia are many and some of them are unique to Indonesian culture. For example, the ability to communicate and maintain national cohesiveness on a multi-cultural organization. While all countries do have different culture inside each respective countries, Indonesia enjoys a widely divergent culture, races and religions. United States has only few major races and cultures which are the Anglo-Saxons, the Indians, the Asian-Americans, the Latinos and the African-American but it is not so in Indonesia we got lot more. We got people of Aceh, Batak, Melayu, Bugis, Papua, Bali, Javanese and many more, not including subcultures in each culture. The first important thing that is closely related to political condition is that Indonesian leaders should not engage in transactional leadership as it will only affect interested parties at the cost of other parties (Conger, 1991). To mitigate these steps a selection process should reduce "interested" parties as little as possible and allows more individual and independent parties to emerge in political world of Indonesia.

It should also be important to engage with Indonesian people the follower of the leader itself. Collinson argues that there are no leaders if there are no followers (Bartels *et al.*, 2010). While, it can be argued that all Indonesians are as followers on the basis of citizenship and by birth, it could be argued that citizens that refuses to follow the leader, refuses to build social constructs (Groddeck, 2011) or refuses to identify themselves as the followers of the leader or refuses to be embodied in the values that the leaders has been embodied (Groddeck, 2011) are not followers.

Competence: Competence, according to is divided into 3 constructs:

- Expertise and experience
- Knowledge
- An assortment of basic cognitive capabilities and functions such as deduction, memory recall, etc.

Boyatzis approach is to define what is competence and according to Boyatzis, it is something that is required for every people to be competent. In national leadership issues, people are expecting their leaders to be competent, as leaders are the one that the people look into to handle a crisis and to return a sense of normalcy (Boin *et al.*, 2010). In a sense, the people of the nation are expecting the leaders to act in such competent manner that the leaders must be able to handle the crisis and solve the problems.

According to Naquin and Holton (2003) an individual performance skills is helping the organization achieving its goals by able to made concepts and designs to be able to be operated.

Selection process: The selection process of Indonesia national leadership is through a democratic election but the candidates are selected from parties that have >20% of seats in the parliament. While the selection of the individual is left to the people, its goes without mention that a sort of selection is still done by parties, not by the public. Thus, there are still a selection process which thus could be improved to find the leaders of Indonesia that possess superior traits that will benefit Indonesia as a whole. The laws of Indonesia also stated that candidates without political backing from parties will not be able to run for presidential office which carries the consequences that the government, political parties or the selection committee is the one that should burden the responsibilities of establishing leaders candidate not the public, as the public have no options to select a leader without any “intervention” from political parties or from the government.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Conceptual model proposed and discussion: Conger (1991) argued that the leadership of a person is shown in its ability to communicate, so that communication skills and trait will be affecting a person’s leadership ability. Further more, it is also stated that having negative traits when communicating such as grogginess will be viewed as inability of the leader by the perspective of the other people which in this case is the other people. In this sense, the researcher is also taking leadership not as a trait that is inherent in the people but also a thing that is sensed by other people essentially taking other person’s perspective not only looking at the trait itself (Fig. 1).

The researcher is arguing that superior competence and leadership will end up into superior national performance hence, to find maximum national performance

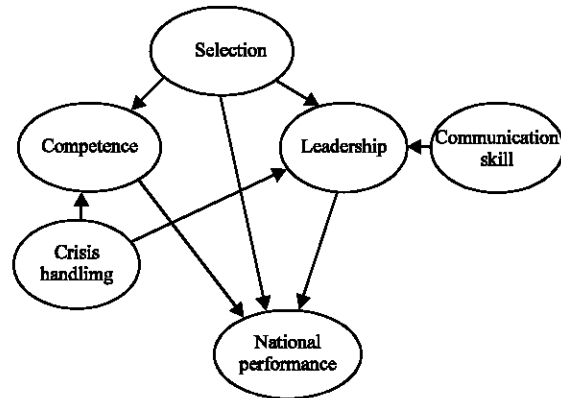


Fig. 1: Model for Indonesian national leadership

it can be argued that these two variables must be maxed too. On the selection process, according to Aragon (2009) it is argued that the method of the selection could have an impact on national performance, in Aragon’s case it is discussing about the increase or decrease of national corruption level. Aragon’s research suggests that one method of selection (democratic) will result in better performing countries in Latin America. The implication of these research in the model is that the selection process itself, the method of selection itself, will have profound impact on the national performance. Also argues that selection of individuals in the process to select the national leader may also affect the national performance.

While this research is not aiming to find the perfect, utopian ways of selecting a leader, one of the premises of this thesis is to enforce Aragon (2009)’s that the method of the selection could change the performance of the nation or change the performance of the organization as a whole. The researcher will also discuss on how competence and leadership will moderate these factors on how much competence and leadership will skew the national performance. It’s apparent that competence will affect national performance (Naquin and Holton, 2003) and so does leadership will affect performance as researched by Vugt (2006).

The crisis handling aspect is stipulated to affect both the competencies and leadership of the leader itself. Leadership and competencies are both required in crisis handling (Boyatzis, 2008) but the research will discover is crisis handling in 2 Dimensions, on how much crisis is handled by superior leadership and how much crisis is handled by superior competency. Though leadership and competency are closely related and overlapped in some areas (Carnevale *et al.*, 2011) it is apparent that both have different characteristics.

CONCLUSION

To be able to be the leader of Indonesia, one must possess characteristics that will complement Indonesia. To lead Indonesia is not only about getting the most votes during the election process or getting the most seats on the parliament but by having the correct characteristics to lead the unique Indonesian people. Most Indonesian leadership and political parties are only thinking how to get elected but not what they do when they got elected. This should be changed as the process to be elected is different when the leaders has been elected. During the election process, the citizens could see what is the “proposed” solution the “proposed” characteristics and the “proposed” trait of the future leaders throughout the candidates but none is the fact.

The fact is that when the leader himself is elected. There should be changes regarding the selection process itself. A good selection process should be able to vet leaders with good leadership and have good characteristics and competencies to be future leaders of Indonesia. Leaders should be chosen for their merits, characteristics, abilities and competencies not their allegiance to a particular parties.

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