

Perception of Effective Multicultural Leadership: A Qualitative Study in Western Java

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Abstrak

Dengan meningkatnya berbagai konflik etno-religius di Indonesia, studi kualitatif ini berupaya untuk menemukan kriteria kepemimpinan efektif untuk kondisi Indonesia yang memiliki ragam kebudayaan. Wawancara dilakukan terhadap 8 orang informan dan 14 orang dalam dua *Focus Group Discussion* (FGD). Ditemukan bahwa faktor-faktor yang terkait dengan kepemimpinan multikultural efektif untuk menangani konflik etno-religius adalah atribut personal, kompetensi perilaku, dan pengalaman terkait keberagaman. Salah satu temuan signifikan dari penelitian ini yang berbeda dari hasil penelitian di budaya Barat yang sekuler adalah peran religiusitas yang dapat mendukung efektifitas kepemimpinan dalam menangani konflik etno-religius. Hasil ini menunjukkan perlunya penelitian-penelitian lanjutan tentang kepemimpinan yang efektif dalam berbagai konteks di budaya non Barat.

Kata kunci: kepemimpinan multikultural, konflik etno-religius

Abstract

With the rise of ethno-religious conflicts in Indonesia, this qualitative study aims to find the criteria for effective leadership in Indonesia's multicultural setting. A total of 8 informants were interviewed and 14 others participated in a two Focus Group Discussions. Results showed that factors related to effective multicultural leadership in handling ethno-religious conflicts were personal attributes, behavioral competencies, and experience related to the diversity. One significant finding of this research which is different from other researches in secular Western settings is the role of religiosity in enhancing leadership effectiveness for handling ethno-religious conflicts. This result showed the need for further researches on leadership effectiveness in various contexts in non Western cultures.

Keywords: multicultural leadership, ethno-religious conflict

Introduction

A report by the Indonesian Ministry of Internal Affairs showed that in 2016, 525 social conflicts arose all over the country, in which 431 has been resolved, and 94 are still being mediated (Kementerian Dalam Negeri, 2017). As suggested by Arbatl, Ashraf, Galor and Klemp (2015), since thousands of years ago, population diversity is a predictor of civil conflicts. Indonesia, as a country which host plethora of demographic backgrounds (e.g. ethnicities, religious belief), is a vulnerable setting for the likelihood of conflicts. The latest demographic census showed that the country is very diverse in terms of culture, religion, ethnicity and tribe, with around 1.340 tribes, 300 ethnic

groups, 1.200 local dialects, and 6 officially recognized religions (Na'im & Syaputra, 2011).

Research on a large-scale community in West Kalimantan found that social breakdown happened because of the ineffective local leadership (Sukma, 2005:12). Erzen and Armagan (2015), who conducted extensive research on leadership in conflict resolutions, found that leadership has a strong impact on conflict management. Not only a leader can play a constructive role in ensuring their followers to prevent or stop conflict, but he or she can also become the initiator of a conflict.

Although there have been more than 70 years of research on conflict within the field of psychology (Brørby, 2013), at the moment research is still limited on the topics of effective leadership in conflict resolution between different cultural groups (Chrobot-Mason, Ruderman, Weber, Ohlott,

& Dalton, 2007; Hu, Chen, Gu, Huang, & Liu, 2017), cultural aspects of people management (Aza, 2017; Rodrigues & Sbragia, 2013) or the topics of cross-cultural leadership in relation to conflict management (Grisham & Walker, 2008; Snaebjornsson, Edvardsson, Zydziunnaite, & Vaiman, 2015).

We need more insights regarding the characteristics of effective multicultural leadership especially in a non-WEIRD (Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic) society such as Indonesia (Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010). This study attempted to answer the research question: "What are the leadership criteria that can contribute to effective multicultural leadership in handling ethno-religious conflict?"

Leadership Theories Revisited

The characteristics of an effective leader have been researched for hundreds of years. Ralph Stogdill's original *Handbook of Leadership* (1974), a classic primer on leadership, has been cited by 3,000 references in leadership research. Its revised version has been cited by 7,500 references (Bass, 1990). The reason there are so many researches on leadership is obvious, as poor leadership is the major reason for failures, from project management disaster (Zimmerer & Yasin, 1998) to failed state (Agbor, 2012).

Early leadership studies attempted to list distinctive traits required for leadership effectiveness, hence the term "leaders are born not made" (Jago, 1982). For example, Weber (Weber, Henderson, & Parsons, 1947), described traits such as charisma as "divine gift", and charismatic leaders oftentimes showed this gift and became effective leaders during times of crisis. Later on however, researchers started to question this approach because studies found inconclusive findings on the existence of a universal set of traits that successful leaders must possess (Ghiselli & Brown, 1955).

After the end of the Second World War, researchers shifted their focus from finding leadership traits to studying what leaders actually do (Stogdill, 1973). Attempting to determine distinctive styles of effective leaders, these behavioral studies eventually focused on the relationship between leaders and followers. Two of the most well known are the Ohio State and University of Michigan studies, which found that the behavior of leaders can be explained along a two-dimensional framework of the task and relationship orientation (Fleishman, & Hunt, 1973). Yet what constitutes effective leadership remain elusive, as these early studies on finding the best leadership style for all situations could not be materialized (Kaiser, & DeVries, 2000).

Researchers such as Fiedler (1964), then realized that finding a universally best leadership

style is futile, as the effectiveness of a given style would be dependent on the context. From this understanding, a plethora of leadership studies emerged, adding various situational variables to arrive at leadership effectiveness. For example, Fiedler's contingency leadership theory focuses on a continuum of favorability based on group dependability, task clarity, and formal power. Another is the leadership continuum theory, which considers the levels of freedom a leader delegate to the subordinate, and the level of authority used by the leader (Tannenbaum & Schmidt, 1958). Similarly, Hersey and Blanchard's situational leadership theory (1977) suggested that the most appropriate leadership style should be matched with the readiness of the subordinate(s) and the task that must be done.

Even though these theories have been helpful in explaining the importance of situational variable in leadership effectiveness, yet unanswered questions remain. For instance, "should a leader change his or her style to fit into the situation, or should the situation be changed to fit the leader's style?" Probably the answer is neither. As Fleenor (2006:832) stated succinctly, most researchers have abandoned purely situationist or trait approaches. Instead, they have come to the understanding that effective leadership is the result of the interaction between the traits of the leader and the situation itself.

Contemporary Leadership Studies

Recent studies, while still considering the task and relationship orientation of the old, have added new variables as well. For example, one of the most researched contemporary leadership studies was Bass' (1985) transformational leadership (Hyland, Reeves, & Caputo, 2018). Based on studies by Burns (1978) on charismatic leaders, Bass claimed that leaders can be effective in transforming their subordinates' attitudes, beliefs, and values. This ability to inspire others with shared goals is called by Bass as idealized influenced, which is none other than charisma (Hinkin & Tracey, 1999).

Apparently, the split in leadership studies after the abandonment of traits approach in lieu of the behavioral, has come into a rapprochement through charismatic leadership research (Day & Zaccaro, 2007). These studies hinges upon a new understanding of 'trainable' behaviors that formed charisma, which was previously considered as a trait. For example, the proponents of transformational leadership paradigm proposed training to develop behaviors related to idealized influence (Avolio, 2011). Researchers also found that leadership behavior is influenced by two main factors – stable individual traits which formed the basis of an individual's personality, and

environmental factors such as education, training, experiences and workplace conditions (Bartone, Eid, Johnsen, Laberg, & Snook, 2009; Bass, 1990; Ericsson, Prietula, & Cokely, 2007).

It is also important to note that since the early 2000s, leadership competency models have begun to appear in the United States to develop leaders that could deliver superior performance (Conger & Ready, 2004). Many of the competency profiles were actually derived from behavioral dimensions defined at Assessment Centers (Shipmann et al., 2000), a method originally used to identify military leaders in pre-Nazi Germany, which the US then adopted to select their officers during the second world war (Iles, 1992). Although this may appear as a trait approach, the emphasis was that the behaviors are trainable, so that "leaders can be made, not just born" (Turner & Muller, 2005:53).

Ethno-religious conflict in Indonesia

As a very diverse country, in terms of ethnicity and religion, by nature Indonesia is prone to conflicts. Yani (2017) found the drivers to violent communal conflicts in Indonesia, were income inequalities and cultural gap between migrant groups and local natives who have different ethnicities and religions. Tung Ju Lan (2011) also stated, since the implementation of the regional autonomy law in 1999, this condition became a deadly mix when identity politics was promoted in local politics, such as in the Maluku and Poso conflicts. It was the perceptions of injustice between the Christian and Muslim communities, and changes to local political arrangements, that provided the *raison d'être* for the conflict in those areas (Adler, 2018).

Consistent with Tajfel's (1978) social identity theory, after the end of the New Order government in 1998, religious identity became stronger in Indonesia, especially amongst the Islamic communities (Subagya, 2015). This, in turn, reduces the sense of nationalism and commitment to the Indonesian nation-state, causing greater support for violent ethno-religious conflict (Bertrand, 2004). Despite all this, however, the voices of moderation still held strong in Indonesia. At the height of Maluku conflict, hardliners opted for "holy war", yet Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, the two largest Muslim organization in Indonesia, refused to go along the line (Ali, 2007). Instead, their leaders portrayed the conflict in a more complex form, involving economic and political factors rather than purely in religious terms.

Leadership and Ethno-Religious Conflict Resolution

Studies have shown the role of leaders in instigating ethno-religious conflicts in order to create political context, so that ethnicity or religion became the most relevant identity (Wilson, 2008). In fact, van Klinken (2007) found that in the absence of formal leadership, intolerable grievances will generally fester and make the conflict worsen. In the ethno-religious conflicts in Maluku, it was the laypeople with no religious roles who emerged as leaders of rival religious militias (Wilson, 2008:118-119). Findings like these, certainly necessitate a study of effective leaders in ethno-religious conflict in a country like Indonesia.

However, studies on effective leadership that can help resolve conflict are hard to find. Unfortunately, since the end of the Cold War era, intrastate conflicts caused by ethno-religious conflict has increased significantly all over the world (Langholtz, 2009; Roberts, 1996). Yet, literature search using the ProQuest database, with key terms encompassing "ethno-religious conflict and leadership" and "leadership in multicultural society", returned only twenty studies pertinent to the current research. Further analysis showed that most conflict resolution studies were using Western lenses, unsurprising given that the study of conflict resolution was born in European and North American universities (Duffey, 2000; Leeds, 2001, Ugorji, 2016), and the same can be said on leadership research (Barkema, Chen, George, Luo, & Tsui, 2015).

In addition, there is also a confusion in terminology, in that researchers have used the term multicultural and cross-cultural leadership interchangeably. This is probably due to the fact that they have not reached a consensus on the specific definition of leadership, let alone the cross-cultural or multicultural ones (Braziel, 2011:44). For example, Bordas (2007 in Webb et al. 2014:7), defines multicultural leadership as "*an inclusive approach and philosophy that incorporates the influences, practices, and values of diverse cultures in a respectful and productive manner,*" while Braziel, 2011:46) defines cross-cultural leadership as "*the ability for a leader to achieve the organization's mission while maintaining the capability of operating effectively in a global environment while being respectful of cultural diversity,*" which in essence is the same thing, i.e. leading effectively while respecting cultural differences. As such, in this paper, the term cross-cultural and multicultural leadership will also be used interchangeably.

Method

Since the topic of effective multicultural leadership in handling ethno-religious conflicts are still limited, this research was conducted as a qualitative study. A thematic interpretation content analysis was also chosen because it can provide evidence for exploration in areas where existing knowledge is limited (Aronson, 1994).

Data were compiled in 2017 from the city of Bandung and Bekasi in the West Java Province, and in North Jakarta. All have similarities - previously homogeneous cities that have become growth centers so that currently they have become diverse with economic migrants from all over Indonesia (Badan Pusat Statistik Kota Bandung, 2017; Badan Pusat Statistik Kota Bekasi, 2017; Badan Pusat Statistik Kota Jakarta Utara, 2017). With the changing demographics, conflicts were mostly related to ethno-religious issues, especially on building houses of worship in places where people have different religions (Marsiela, 2016; Rudi, 2017).

Participants

Participants were chosen through purposive sampling, in which the researchers were assisted by the Army Territorial Commands who provided the researchers with the list in Table 1, of individuals who were effective in handling ethno-religious

conflicts. The researchers then contacted the research participants individually to convey the intention to conduct the research. In accordance with the research protocol from the Indonesian Defense University, the research participants were provided with the consent form, explanation about the purpose of the research, and information about the possibility of publishing the result of the research.

The Indonesian Army as in many other developing countries adopted the Total Defense Doctrine involving the participation of civilians (Satrio, Midhio & Ahmad R., 2018). Thus, the Territorial Command is tasked with developing interaction with formal and informal leaders in the territory (Hidayat, 2013), such as the participants of this research. This way, the command can have an early warning system in social conflict prevention. This doctrine is in fact in line with the so-called Concordance Theory of Civil-Military Relations proposed by Rebecca Schiff (1995). According to her, the Institutional Theory of Civil-Military Relations put forward by Huntington (1957) as the dominant doctrine in the West, is more applicable to the individualistic culture and values which existed in the United States. Therefore, the separation of the civilian and military function should be negotiated according to the cultural landscape of each country.

Table 1
Description of Interviewees

<u>Informant</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Religion</u>	<u>Ethnicity/ Race</u>	<u>Location</u>
11	Female	Housewife and head of a community association group in a middle class housing	Islam	Sundanese	West Java
12	Male	Businessman and community leader	Roman Catholic	Chinese	West Java
13	Male	University Professor and Head of the Bandung FKBUB	Islam	Sundanese	West Java
14	Male	Government bureaucrat	Islam	Sundanese	West Java
15	Male	City Mayor	Islam	Sundanese	West Java
16	Male	Community Leader	Islam	Banten	Jakarta
17	Male	Head of a local religious boarding school	Islam	Javanese	Jakarta
18	Male	Former businessmen and currently is a social activist	Buddhist	Chinese	Jakarta

Data triangulation was conducted to support the integrity of the evidence in which information was collected from multiple sources for greater accuracy (Yin, 2003). Consequently, semi-structured and open-ended interviews were conducted with 8 informants, followed up by 2 Focus Group Discussions (FGD). The first one was with 7 members of the Bekasi

Metropolitan Area Inter-Religious Harmony Forum (*Forum Komunikasi Umat Beragama*), which consists of representatives from all religions in Indonesia in the area, and whose role is to conduct inter-religious dialogue; formulate policy recommendations; and educate the community on laws related to religious harmony (Crouch, 2010). The second FGD was

result of large scale voluntary internal migrations to all growth areas of Indonesia. As explained by I5, the mayor of the fastest growing metropolitan city in the province of West Java:

"If you are previously from this city and then live somewhere else and return .. you will no longer recognize it. Before the 80's, people here are homogeneous, most were farmers and small traders, very religious and almost all Moslems. Now only 82% are Moslems.So as if people from religions other than Islam are doing missionary works here.this is a

misunderstanding on some people here, and if we are trapped in this issue, then in places of high growth where Moslems are minorities, they will receive the same treatment..... In a heterogeneous society like in Indonesia, it would be impossible for this city to become homogeneous again, it will never happen. But to make people realize and become loyal to a system, that is what should be created out of this city this Republic."

Table 2
Leadership Criteria Themes and Subthemes

Personal Attributes			Behavioral Competencies		Experience
<u>Cognitive Abilities</u>	<u>Traits</u>	<u>Values</u>	<u>Personal</u>	<u>Interpersonal</u>	
Intelligence	Character	Discipline	Ability to lead	Desire to protect the community	Cross-cultural encounters
Creativity (covert)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patience • Firmness • Bravery • Passionate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religiosity • Sincerity • Principled 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovativeness • Consistency • Courage (overt) • Intuition • Obedience to rules/ regulations • Creativity (overt) 		

Personal Attributes

The Army psychologists grouped three sub-themes that emerged from the coding process into the more general theme of personal attributes. These sub-themes are cognitive abilities, traits and values which are organized in a continuum from more stable and permanent attribute like cognitive abilities to more fluid such as personal values.

Cognitive Abilities

During the Expert Judgment process, it was agreed that the average level of general intelligence (g factor) is required for an effective leader. According to I5:

"Intelligencethis ability can be measured from our formal education also from our ability to change people... With our intelligence, we can understand what the people want from this Republic.... they want to be healthy, educated, the security condition to be safe, there is economic growth."

In addition, an effective leader must also have creativity. The army psychologists distinguished between overt forms of creativity which is at the level of thinking and its covert form which was classified as personal competencies. According to I4, who worked as a local bureaucrat in the Office For National Unity and Politics (*Badan Kesatuan Bangsa dan Politik-Kesbangpol*):

"This is like opening up public spaces so as not to limit the creativity of the people in the area. Communities always open to new innovations from the people. So we should consider and apply suggestions from the public in solving a conflict."

Traits

Consistent with the theory, traits were found to be important for successful multi-cultural leaders, and they include character, passion, bravery, patience, firmness, and intuition, a sample of which are discussed here. On character, what the informants referring to is more related to the morality that has been inculcated since childhood. I6 is a community

leader of an ethnic group which is known to be tough, aggressive towards other ethnic group and oftentimes considered as prone to violent tactics. As a respected elder in his community, he was often asked by the Territorial Command to act as a mediator in social conflicts. According to him:

"A person with character is a person with morals. If he or she has good morality, then he or she will not be tempted to create conflict, even though when their community is being "attacked" from outside."

According to I4, who is responsible for handling conflict in his area, an effective leader must have the passion and enjoy handling conflict.

"...Handling conflict, for me, is like socializing with the people, and this is very satisfying because I was able to handle even the smallest conflict. I was able to befriend them and their lives become more stable. And this gives me enjoyment which cannot be replaced with money."

Another important trait is bravery. I2 said about this on the bravery of I1 when describing how as a former student of Islamic boarding schools (*Pesantren*) herself, she had no problem in lecturing a Moslem spiritual advisor in the housing complex who were previously very much against participating in the celebration of different religion, on the virtue of religious tolerance. Afterward, this spiritual advisor turned around and became an active supporter of her leadership. According to I2:

"After the first rejection, then again we conduct a joint Christmas celebration, and this Moslem spiritual adviser gave a speech. And we were all flabbergasted as he said that this is the celebration of the birthday of the Prophet Isa Al Masih. He is also our prophet from the twenty-five that we have, and if we delete one, then we are no longer Moslem.So, because of her bravery in speaking to anyone who opposed her and we were able to solve the problem."

Values

Personal values which include discipline, religiosity, sincerity and principled are also considered as necessary for an effective

multicultural leader, and a few of them are interrelated. For example, I1 explained:

"In order to be sincere, you need to have strong faith. A sincere leader does not expect monetary gain, but show a willingness to communicate and having a close relationship with Allah and with another human being."

Behavioral Competencies

While personal attributes are stable and harder to change, leadership behavioral competencies are something that can be changed because they are overt behavior that are trainable (Wustemann, 2000).

Personal Competencies

Personal competencies are competencies that a leader must personally have in order to be an effective leader and include the ability to lead, innovativeness, consistency, courage (overt behavior as opposed to bravery which was considered as a trait), intuition, obedience to rules and regulations and overt creativity. On obedience to rules and regulations, the following statement is from I5, the city mayor:

"If we wanted to become leaders, we have to know what the people wanted. And when we know it, then we have to see if it is in accordance with the rules and regulations. If it is, then there is no problem. However, when it is not in accordance with the regulation, then we have to face a process. In this process, we have to make a policy that is not deviating from the rules. Because if we let this happen, then as a leader we will be judged as an inconsistent person."

Experience

Experience in cross-cultural encounter was deemed important for multicultural leaders. According to I7:

"We cannot avoid globalization, therefore myself as a religious leader must always propagate Islam from many angles, from the cultural side or other perspective that Islam is a religion that accept others. When I was in secondary school, I befriended many Chinese. Then I went to high school in Chinatown (Downtown Jakarta), so for me it is not a problem if they have a different religion."

During the FGD, the themes and subthemes of the criteria for effective multicultural leaders that were mentioned by the informants were discussed in the FGD as part of the triangulation process. As an example, on the need to hold on firmness as a trait of successful leaders, in the FGD held at Metropolitan Bekasi, regarding pressure from a notorious intolerant group coming from outside the area who wanted to ban the building of a place of worship, one of the participants stated that:

"Like in the North, they rejected the building of the Santa Clara church. If we see all the regulations from bottom up, nothing is wrong. But then they set up a new organization called North Bekasi Muslim Assembly (Majelis Muslim Bekasi Utara). Then the question is how does a Regional Leader handle this? First, our Mayor acted firmly according to his principles. As long as what he does is in accordance with the regulation, he was not afraid, because he considered what he was doing as serving the people of Bekasi. (Second) He felt that he must serve everyone. There is no such thing as majority or minority, because our region has been developed to become what it is now. The third is legal certainty. If there is certainty, there is nothing to be afraid of. By adopting this kind of policy, and with the help and advice from all of us, he was declared as a tolerant Mayor, and received awards, from the national government, and from the National Human Rights Committee (Komnas HAM)."

Discussion

The objective of this study was to provide an understanding of the leadership criteria needed to be effective in handling horizontal conflicts in multicultural societies in Indonesia. Using a qualitative approach with the help of Nvivo software and Expert Judgment of Army Psychologists, we were able to list the personal attributes, behavioral competencies, and experience needed to become effective leaders.

On the personal attributes, discussion on the influence of personality traits on leadership behaviors emanates from the question on where does leadership impact comes from? According to Judge, Bono, Ilies and Gerhardt (2002:767), "...leader emergence refers to whether an individual is viewed as a leader by others, who

typically have only limited information about that individual's performance". In the situation of conflict, researchers found that individuals who were able to develop constructive approaches to conflict are viewed as effective leaders, even though they do not hold formal leadership positions (Patterson, Grenny, McMillan, & Switzler, 2002:11). In this regards, Chan, Soh and Ramaya (2011:97-98), considered personality traits, including cognitive abilities, motivation and "Big Five" traits such as extraversion, conscientiousness, and agreeableness as predictors of leader emergence.

Accordingly, the finding of this study confirmed the findings of Chan et al., albeit with more specific traits and abilities related to ethno-religious conflicts, and specifically in the Indo-nesian context. The authors opined that there are several new theoretical contributions to the study of effective multicultural leadership in handling ethno-religious conflicts as follows.

First is the need to be creative and innovative. The Army's Territorial Command has partners in the local government bureaucracy (Agency of National Unity and Politics - *Kesbangpol*) and civil society (Area Inter-Religious Harmony Forum-FKUB and Early Public Vigilance Forum-FKDM), in which they are responsible among others for preventing ethno-religious conflicts. These organizations probably existed only in Indonesia. Because there is no one-size-fits-all solution for ethno-religious conflict, people who belonged to these forums, could provide advices to the local government on how to prevent social conflicts. And as found in this study, they can be creative in finding innovative solutions to conflict prevention. Considering that this study also found overt creativity as trainable personal competency is important for effectively handling ethno-religious conflicts, training programs in this context should also be promoted. One creation of these forums is the so called "tolerant village (*kampung toleransi*)" all over Indonesia, in areas consisting of different ethno-religious backgrounds. In one such community in the city of Bandung, West Java, people with different cultural identities were grouped together and encouraged to conduct self-help by sharing problems and finding solutions among them (Zahra, 2019).

The second contribution is the creation of multicultural experience in handling social problems. The tolerant village mentioned above can provide the multicultural experience needed for emerging leaders to be effective mediators of social conflict. As stated by Ang, van Dyne, and Koh's finding (2006), cultural intelligence can be improved through multicultural experience. In

fact, studies by Hidayat, Purwono, and Susianto (2019) also showed that Indonesians like other collectivists were good at using their intuition in judgment and decision making, and cross-cultural experience was found helpful in fostering cultural intuition needed for leaders to be successful in ethno-religious mediation.

Next is the importance of religiosity, de Juan, Pierskalla and & Vüllers (2015) found the majority of formal religious institutions in conflict areas were in fact have a pacifying effect on the communal violence that occurred in Indonesia. The faithful in the ethno-religious conflict usually raise up issues of perceived injustices or imminent threat to their religious leaders. In turn, many of these leaders tend to become part of an early warning system and acted to prevent conflict escalation. The authors believed this is one important theoretical contribution of this study. Unlike the secular Western leaders, in order for Indonesian leaders to be effective in handling conflict, he or she must be religious so that they will be accepted by their own coreligionist, yet at the same time must also be willing to accept people from other religions.

The last contribution is that an effective leader in handling ethno-religious conflicts must have a passion in it and have a desire to protect the community. Since the authors could not find any study related to the passion in handling conflict, this is indeed a new finding in the study of conflict resolution and leadership. As mentioned in the verbatim, one of the informants who work at the local government's office in charge of national unity enjoy handling conflicts. In fact, he mentioned that he did not enjoy his much "safer" previous works as he felt that he has no contribution to society.

Limitation and Future Research

Because this research is qualitative in nature, there might be bias in the data gained from the informant. In addition, the location of the research was confined to the island of Java where horizontal conflicts were not as violent as in the less developed outer islands, so that the result might be different if the data gathering is done in these areas. In the future, the location of the research should be expanded, so that a comparison of leadership criteria across Indonesia can be developed.

Conclusion

Through studying the criteria for leaders who can effectively handlesocial conflicts in a multi-

cultural society like Indonesia, we were able to discover how successful leaders use their traits, behavioral competencies and experience to solve horizontal conflicts. We hope our initial model will enable future research that will develop a better leadership theory related to conflict resolution.

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Appendix: Interview Questions

1. Can you describe your profile and experience in handling ethno-religious conflicts?
2. Can you describe the demographic in your area and the relationship among the different communities?
3. Can you explain the most common ethno-religious conflicts in your area? What are the outcomes? How do the people react? How does the government respond?
4. Can you describe successful leadership stories in handling ethno-religious conflicts in your area? The leader can be yourself or other people that you know. Please describe the situation, the goal that the leader wanted to achieve, the action or steps taken by the leader, and the results.
5. Related to question 4, please elaborate on the leadership criteria for the successful leaders