Character and Competence of a Leader in the Digital Age

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Abstract

It is not easy to find an ideal leader these days. We tend to appoint or choose a leader merely based on his/her competencies often ignoring the more important and absolute requirement for a great leader, that is his/her character. A great leader is a leader who has both high-quality character dan competencies. Now, it becomes a great challenge for any organization both public and private sectors to identify who will be a candidate for a great leader who has both good competencies and a strong character. The objective in discussing this thesis is how to face a great leader who has competencies and character. Using library research and analysis descriptive. The procured outcome is a high quality, character, and competent leader who is the primary objective for any organization, therefore, it is necessary for a leader to immediately find solutions for its organization.

Keywords: Character, competence, digital age, leader.

1. INTRODUCTION

There has been a lot of literature that has attempted to explain the importance of leadership to bring about change for the better for all countries or companies. Various dimensions and perspectives of leadership in various situations and conditions make the study more complex and dynamic.

In Indonesia, with the end of the presidential term, many figures or individuals can lead the government in the future so that they can bring Indonesia out of the economic and financial crisis that hit the world. Meanwhile, large companies routinely monitor leadership performance according to the expectations and targets that have been agreed with the board of commissioners.

The problems faced by both public and private organizations have the same interest, namely how leaders carry out their leadership to be able to cope with and adapt to increasingly complex and dynamic external and internal environmental pressures, be it economic, social, political, or competitive pressures. This eternal change requires various competencies for a leader to be able to overcome various problems. However, the conflict here is whether the required competencies can guarantee the effectiveness of one's leadership? Many facts show that competence in terms of knowledge, skills, and experience does not guarantee success in getting out of the crisis at hand.

Leadership is relational which requires cooperation and cohesiveness of the management team in addition to the support of employees and the public as well as organizational stakeholders. In this case, there is a strong demand that a leader must be supported and trusted by its constituents. Confidence and trust from the constituents to the leader is a very important prerequisite for obtaining majority support so that the efforts being made to overcome the crisis are not interrupted in the middle of the road or even start from scratch again.

This paper attempts to explain why nowadays it is increasingly difficult to find great leaders

who have high competence and are also supported by the majority of their constituents.

2. Discussions

2.1 Leader Competencies

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The New Penguin Dictionary of Business 2002 defines competence as knowledge and skills that exist in the organization. Competencies include technical knowledge, technical skills, business process knowledge, and business skills. Every organization, both private and public, has competencies that are not the same and unique so that they can be better and superior to their competitors.

Professor Schweiger & Topping (2002) was asked by a large German company, Robert Bosch Corporation with its main division in America to develop long-term, twenty-year managerial competencies (1995-2015). After conducting a series of focus groups, in-depth interviews with senior executives, and benchmark research with the best and relevant companies, they identified nine managerial competencies that emphasize the behavioral perspective:

A. Increase the empowerment and development of colleagues and personnel. Continuous learning, improving performance, gaining new competencies, and taking more initiative and responsibility.

a. Encourage risk-taking, innovation, and organizational development. Prepare for development and free-flowing initiatives and ideas to implement technological processes, products, and/or services.

b. Build partnerships with external customers. Build relationships with customers to understand current and future needs and expectations and get feedback to see how well the Bosch company is meeting them and being more effective.

c. Demonstrate social responsiveness and ethical behavior. Understanding and integrating into various decisions and behaviors that

consider legal, ethical, and social aspects take more initiative and responsibility.

B.   Encourage risk-taking, innovation, and organizational development. Prepare for development and free-flowing initiatives and ideas to implement technological processes, products, and/or services.

C.   Build partnerships with external customers. Build relationships with customers to understand current and future needs and expectations and get feedback to see how well the Bosch company is meeting them and being more effective.

D.   Demonstrate social responsiveness and ethical behavior. Understand and integrate into various decisions and behaviors that consider legal, ethical, and social aspects

E.   Overcome various problems and make decisions. Prioritizing complex problems and decisions and tackling and implementing them effectively promptly.

F.   Build and utilize the team and internal network. Take the initiative to build and utilize internal networks and cross-global organization teams to facilitate organizational performance.

G.   Involve strategic thinking. Consider and integrate into long-term decisions the organizational impact of the decisions made.

H.   Communicating with other parties. Demonstrate effective two-way communication strategies and techniques to facilitate work effectiveness, goal attainment, and employee motivation

I.   Understand the internal organization, business, and industry of Robert Bosch United States.

Understand the international internal and external environment, vision, mission, strategy, and Bosch corporate goals. If the competency approach above is more specific to the interests of certain organizations and focuses more on behavioral perspectives, then Bennis (2006) generally suggests that competencies are classified into two, namely leader competencies in terms of leadership and professional

competencies from leaders. The leader's competence in leadership includes three aspects, namely :

A.   Organizational leadership is concerned with the effectiveness and relevance of the organization. The focus is primarily external on the specific skills and behaviors that are expected to be:

a. creating and clarifying the direction in which organizational goals are headed.

b. Align organization and resources to direction and goals organization

c. Sell and promote messages of the direction and purpose of the organization.

B.   Operational leadership is concerned with the efficiency and responsiveness of the organization's operational activities. Specific skills and behaviors expected include:

a. planning and shaping process

b. organizing and supervising

c. measurement and problem-solving

C.   People leadership is concerned with the productivity of the individuals working in the organization. Specific skills and behaviors expected include:

a. selecting and matching the right people

b. explain and clarify expectations

c. motivation and development

Meanwhile, the professional competence of the leader according to Manning (2007) includes three things:

A.   knowledge of market and industry.

B.   Functional expertise such as marketing, accounting, sales, or information technology

C.   Judgment and speed of making business decisions.

According to Bell, most leaders are promoted or appointed based on their professional competence. In more detail Zwell (2000) says that with the competencies possessed, it is expected to be able to:

A.   Helping organizations create a high-performance culture

B.   used in every human resource process such as selection, performance management, succession planning, etc

C.   improve the process of human resources used, so that the more effective the organization creates a high-performance culture

D.   Used for:

a. communicating corporate standards and values

b. analyze and improve corporate culture

c. selecting and hiring workers

d. assessing and developing workforce

e. develop leaders

f. managing the succession planning process

g. develop a training strategy foundation

h. help with the compensation process

Regarding competence and various benefits, the problem that arises is why leaders occupy various professional positions in both sectors public and private companies with high competence and according to job criteria have not succeeded in achieving their organizational goals or missions. In other words, are the competencies used are considered adequate to occupy a position? The factor that is also dominant for great leadership but tends to be neglected in the job criteria is character.

2.2 Character of Leader

If Bell suggests leadership competence is applying elegant and dignified ways (noble) to achieve dignified goals with knowledge, skills, and talents, then the character in leadership is achieving dignified goals in dignified ways. Character is related to one's integrity. Manning & Curtis (2007) stated that the most important leadership quality is integrity, which is understood as honesty, the strength of character, and courage. Without integrity there is no trust (mutual trust), integrity produces trust, and trust produces respect, loyalty, and

ultimately action. The same thing was also stated by Kirkpatrick & Locke (2008) that honesty and integrity are goodness that exists in all individuals, but has special significant value for leaders. Integrity is the relationship between bites and deeds, while honesty refers to the truth or not deceiving.

They form the foundation of a trusting relationship between leaders and followers. Warren (2007) further explains that without integrity, leaders can have employees who are obedient but never committed. The difference between the two has a very significant impact on the success of the organization.

2.3 Character of Leader

If you look closely, there are many cases published in various media that indicate character inconsistencies, such as falsification of marriage certificates, inflating votes in regional head elections, legal apparatus (prosecutors, police, judges) accepting bribes, rampant corruption. it is not surprising if someone says that the Indonesian nation is experiencing a chronic moral crisis. Maxwell then quotes a statement from Anthony Harrigan, President of US Business and Industrial Council :

"The role of character has always been a key factor in the ups and downs of the character state is the only effective protector against internal and external forces that can result in the disintegration or collapse of a country".

The above statement is also supported by Thorsborne (2003) that the biggest downfall due to a lack of integrity is the loss of trust in various institutions, industries, management, and individuals. In the vacuum created by the loss of trust, mutual suspicion and paranoia emerge. It is not surprising that all lost faith in institutions, management, the business world, and in those who lead, the emergence of cynicism and distrust of officials' ability to prioritize welfare at there are two aspects of the character:

A.   The Soul of The Leader where the inner drives of the leader include the stability

of his leadership philosophy, a clear moral compass, and a high sense of self-awareness.

B.   The Leader's personal qualities include integrity, focus, courage, care, humility. What can a leader do to gain the trust of his constituents? Jones 6t Posner (2007:243-244) suggests that the first thing that needs to be done is:

a. Disclosing information about the leader's background and beliefs.

b. Admit mistakes

c. Recognizing the need for personal improvement

d. Asking for both positive and negative feedback

e. Listen attentively to what others have to say

f. Inviting interested parties to important meetings

g. Various useful information with various parties

h. Openly acknowledge the contributions of various parties

i. Shows a desire to change your mind if someone comes up with a better idea

j. Avoid negative talk about other people

k. Can say "we can trust them" and be serious about what he says.

If the above methods are applied consistently, it can be expected that Kouzes & Posner's expression "Trust is the lifeblood of collaborative teamwork"

2.4 The Relationship Between Character And Competence

A.   Caracter and competence are two aspects that every great leader needs to have. Bennis (2006) said that the relationship between character and patent is symbiotic. Character produces courage and courage strengthens competence, competence produces confidence and self-confidence strengthens character.

B.   Bell himself admits that leaders who have character and competence are very rare. A person's character can change, so the main measure used to recruit someone today is based on competence, paying little attention to character.

C.   Person's character can change so that the main measurement used to recruit someone based on competence only pays little attention to character. It is also said that the short-term benefits of competence that ignore character are in vain when compared to the long-term losses that result from it. We need to be reminded that character, and not competence, is with us long after the leader is gone. The same thing was stated by Bennis and Thomas (2007) that leadership is always about character. It can be said that everyone remembers world leaders from the past such as Prophet Muhammad SAW, Jesus Christ, or Mahatma Gandhi because of their strong character. If it is mentioned who are the big figures in Indonesia, both from the public and business sectors who have strong characters, the author is very difficult to identify, but if asked about competence, it will be easy to find.

2.5 Quadrant of Character and Competence

By paying attention to the relationship between character and competence, Bennis (2006) makes a quadrant that will produce four possibilities as shown in table 1 below.

Table 1, *Quadrant of Character and Competence*

character height	Dignified But Less Skilled	Dignified and Competent
LOW	Unskilled and Untrustworthy	Competent but Untrustworthy

From the lower-left quadrant above, the leaders here have low character and compensation so they are considered less skilled and cannot be trusted. Such a leader does not deserve to be recognized for his leadership. The world knows the dictatorship of Idi Amin from Uganda who falls into this category. The upper right quadrant is a leader who has high character and competence so he deserves to be considered

dignified and capable. So great leaders should be in this category.

While the other two quadrants are quadrants that are difficult to handle. Leaders with high competence but the low character (lower right quadrant) are basically capable but not trustworthy, and even corrupt. It is said by Bell that they are a gift but dangerous. Many people tend to tolerate this kind of leader because it will at least give results, but if corruption is rampant, the community's tolerance is limited.

2.6 Decision Making Skills

The values possessed by a decision-maker, for example, a leader, depend on several main factors, such as intelligence, capacity, capability, sense of responsibility, and others. According to Eric as contained in Topping Peter, (2007), the types of decision-makers that can be divided into 5 (five) types are as follows;

A.   Dependency Type

This is a type of decision-maker who does not have a firm stand and weak mastery of the problems at hand, so he needs the help of others. To deal with other problems other people's wars became great so he finally became more and more dependent on them. This can happen due to a lack of information, skills, and courage to take risks that may be caused by the decisions taken.

B.   Exploitative Type

This is a type of decision-maker whose decision-making ideas come from other people or subordinates, where the decision-maker exploits them for his benefit because of his inability.

C.   Savings Type

This type of savings is another type of decision-maker, where the decision-maker creates a lot of die ideas, but he saves it to be delivered at the right time according to his interests, for example, to strengthen his position in the organization.

D.   Marketing Type

This type can be said to be the opposite of the savings type above, where this type is aimed at decision-makers who like to share their ideas with others with negative goals, namely just to show off to attract sympathy.

E.   Productive Type

To characterize decision-makers who do have knowledge and skills, take initiative, are creative, and can work well with subordinates, superiors, and co-workers. In addition to the five types above, there are other types of decisions such as; According to Davis, the type of decision is divided into two, the first is that the decision is very relative. However, there is some kind of general guideline in carrying out the steps, namely; In this section, one of the guidelines is presented.

a.   Knowing the problems that have been prioritized to find solutions and the background to the emergence of these problems. there are times when a condition has been declared a problem when it is not. For example, there has been an increase in promotional costs, but the sales value tends to decrease. For some managers, this condition is a big problem, even though in marketing theory there is a product life cycle where if a product has reached a declining cycle to death (decline), however large promotional efforts to increase sales value will be in vain. . So the manager should divert the allocation of the use of funds from promotion to the manufacture of new products, for example.

b.   Knowing the risks that must be accepted, if the problem is not handled properly. It may be that this problem is not addressed at all if the Reason is right; for example, is the best decision of the bad alternatives.

c.   Knowing the formulation of the problem. This can be done by identifying and limiting the problem, specifying and classifying the problem, so that the perception between decision-makers and implementers is clear.

d.   Knowing the use of the scientific method. If you want to say that problem

solving is scientific, the stages of research must also follow the scientific method, such as collecting data using statistical methods, using relevant theories, using measuring tools to analyze data, and so on.

e.   Knowing the positive benefits of subordinate involvement. With the involvement of subordinates in the decision-making process, at least the quality of decisions has more weight because managers have a lot of input; employees feel more valued, especially if the types of decisions to be taken are more like dealing with operational problems.

f.   Have high confidence in the results of the decisions made. A decision-maker with high confidence can be seen from the fact that before a decision is taken he has analyzed it carefully and will carry out the decision seriously.

g.   Assess the outcome of the decision. Decisions made and implemented must be assessed whether they are following the goals and objectives, need to be changed for the better, or steps need to be taken to replace them with other alternative decisions that have been prepared.

3. Conclusions

Becoming a great leader is not as easy as what is said or written in various literature. In practice, many good leaders run their leadership has the competencies required in the demands of the position, but the issue of character is a scourge that needs to be considered carefully in recruiting, selecting, or promoting someone to higher positions.

History has proven the fragility and downfall of a government or company due to problems with the character of its leader. The fall of the Marcos government in the Philippines, the government of Adolf Hitler in Germany that sparked World War II, as well as the collapse of the Euron government in America, as well as the Lehman Brothers which ignited the American financial crisis that spread globally stems from the character of its leaders.

Character and competence are absolute prerequisites to becoming a great leader. It is through leadership that organizations can survive and grow in a complex and dynamic environment. With characters and competencies that are symbiotically related, organizations that have a culture of mutual trust can be created and unite the various interests of their constituents. Readers are welcome to identify themselves who are public figures and businesses in Indonesia who have strong characters.

A good leader is a leader who has a strong character in the sense of being able to carry out the leadership function, able to gain support, and be trusted by his constituents. With a belief like this, a leader supports the majority, thus the efforts made to overcome crises or difficulties can be overcome.

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