The Cultural Dimension of Entrepreneurial Leaders in Sundanese Society

Mulyani Karmagatri*
Entrepreneurship Department, BINUS Business School Undergraduate Program
Bina Nusantara University,
Jakarta, Indonesia 11480
Mulyani001@binus.ac.id

Hazmilah Hasan
Faculty of Technology Management and Technopreneurship
Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka
hazmilah@utem.edu.my

Andreas Chang
Entrepreneurship Department, BINUS Business School Undergraduate Program
Bina Nusantara University,
Jakarta, Indonesia 11480
achang@binus.edu

Abstract

Cultural diversity has many shapes and different values in every part of the world. Indeed, cultural differences influence perceptions and behaviors. In the field of entrepreneurship, culture has a significant role in creating successful business launches and certain conditions. Entrepreneurial leaders that have already survived during the first step in building their new venture certainly have a specific attitude that fits the local culture of their employees. This study examined the specific attitude of young entrepreneurs in Sundanese society by using thematic content analysis to formulate cultural dimension. The data were gathered by using in-depth interviews with three fresh graduate entrepreneurs, who have built their businesses during their last 3 to 5 years of studies at the West Java Business University. The respondents were selected purposively according to certain considerations, such as their good business prospects. To help the analysis process, Nvivo was used to code the interview transcripts. The results showed that several attitudes of the entrepreneurial leaders could thematically cluster around the Sundanese dimensions, such as *silih asah, silih asih*, and *silih asuh*. This study offers authentic values of the Sundanese dimensions of entrepreneurial leaders which have not been researched before by using the thematic analysis method. It also contributes to cultural leadership and entrepreneurial leadership research by providing a specific cultural perspective that might have differed if implemented in other countries or regions.

Keywords
Cultural Values, Entrepreneurial Leadership, Sundanese Leadership, Entrepreneurship in West Java

1. Introduction
Cultural diversity has many shapes and different values in every part of the world where it influences perceptions and behaviors. In entrepreneurial realms, culture plays a significant role in creating successful business launches and specific conditions, especially building trust. The most substantial matter that becomes a challenge for many entrepreneurial leaders is getting trust from the organizational members. All the organizational members need to be willing to reach the organizational vision. Regardless of the ideas and depth of planning, research, feasibility is essential during the business process. Entrepreneurial leaders that have already survived during the first step in building their new ventures have a particular attitude that fits the local culture of their employees. Hence, understanding culture is critical in order for leaders to move and influence their followers. This study proposed the

cultural perspective as an approach to get the trust of the organizational members. It represents the cultural values from the Indonesian Culture, particularly Sundanese Culture. Part of the Sundanese culture in the art field is already well-known internationally. Many research and artists learn and explore the Sundanese Culturel. However, in terms of Entrepreneurial Leadership.

Sundanese culture has strong unique rare and familiar philosophy known as SILAS. Silas refers to *Silih Asih, Silih Asah, Silih Asuh*. SILAS is not only part of Sundanese values that are implemented in Sundanese people's daily lives but also in their leadership realms. Silas is part of the dimension of Sundanese Leadership values implemented in the West Java leadership (Mulyani & Ratnapuri, 2018). A qualified leader in the Sundanese perspective should have specific characters derived from such three dimensions.

This study used a Sundanese cultural framework to analyze the leadership of entrepreneurs, especially to explore how they treat their entrepreneurial firm at the initial phase. The issue revolves around whether the Sundanese Values are implemented by the leaders in entrepreneurial firms? The article's primary objective was to evaluate entrepreneurial leadership characteristics in relation to Sundanese values to lend insights into entrepreneurial leadership research in relation to culture to offer a more comprehensive and richer understanding.

2. Literature Review

Entrepreneurship refers to two concepts: entrepreneurship and leadership. Its dual character must be reflected in its definition if it is to be truthful. In order to achieve a shared objective via proactive entrepreneurial activity, risk reduction, personal responsibility, and change management, a leader must organize a team. Proactive entrepreneurial leaders conduct measures in terms of risk management and innovation to take advantage of opportunities, personal responsibility, and change management, among other things (Canestrino et al., 2020; Dimovski et al., 2013; He et al., 2017). Entrepreneurial leaders must be able to communicate their vision clearly. Businesses have ideas of what to accomplish, and entrepreneurs must inspire others to embrace the same ideas. They must have a clear vision for motivating their employees and customers toward a better future. They must think creatively while using holistic thinking to bridge their current situation with their desired future state (Díaz et al., 2017; Herjanto & Hendriana, 2020; Ruvio et al., 2010). Entrepreneurial leadership has different characteristics, ranging from the nature of the duties to the company's structure. It is common for an entrepreneurial leader to have a variety of personality-based skills in order to be effective. An essential part of entrepreneurial leadership is influencing and guiding the behavior of others within a group in order to accomplish organizational objectives, which includes recognizing and seizing entrepreneurial possibilities (Estay et al., 2013; Obschonka et al., 2018; Renko et al., 2015).

Adaptive skill is the skill that an entrepreneurial leader must possess. Entrepreneurial leaders must have in-depth comprehension in terms of culture. They have to act and lead the organization by following the local wisdom to win the hearts of follower. To gain followers' trust, leaders must position themselves based on the values of a certain culture. As a nation that embodies Eastern culture, Indonesia is a home to various ethnic groups and civilizations, including Sundanese. Sundanese culture includes a plethora of values and conventions that have been accepted and implemented in the West Java. Sundanese culture is characterized by various life philosophies that guide and anchor the Sundanese people's personal and social lives, reflecting their held and upheld ideals. Sundanese culture may be defined as all views, thoughts and life experiences that the Sundanese have expressed, manifested, and practiced. Language is used to transmit these cultural beliefs from generation to generation. Jacob Soemardjo (2003)stated that, the Sundanese demonstrate their Sundanese ideals via everyday conduct (Mulyani & Ratnapuri, 2018). In terms of leadership, Sundanese culture is characterized by a plethora of Sundanese values incorporated into the guiding principles of a leader's life. It reflects that a leader's quality is mainly reliant on the quality of his leadership.

Sundanese people are well known as polite and kind(Darajat et al., 2020; Heryana, 2014; Isnendes et al., 2019) leading to respectful and emphatic kinds of communications skill. This communication approach is meaningful in social networks to gather trust. Sundanese has a local wisdom philosophy that is implemented in every aspect of their life known as SILAS. SILAS refer to *Silih Asih, silih asah, and silih asuh*. While *Silih Asih* refers to reciprocal love, care, and tenderness in society. *Silih Asah* is the spirit to keep learning and help others to learn and develop. Besides, *Silih asuh* refers to the caring and protective ways of each members. The leaders that implement SILAS, show affection in their attitudes and behavior. They care for their subordinates and appreciate them highly. They truly understand the importance of knowledge and improve their knowledge continuously, showing passion in sharing their knowledge to the subordinates. The main purpose is to provide knowledge to benefit members, organizations, and environment. Figure 1 illustrates the research framework for this study.
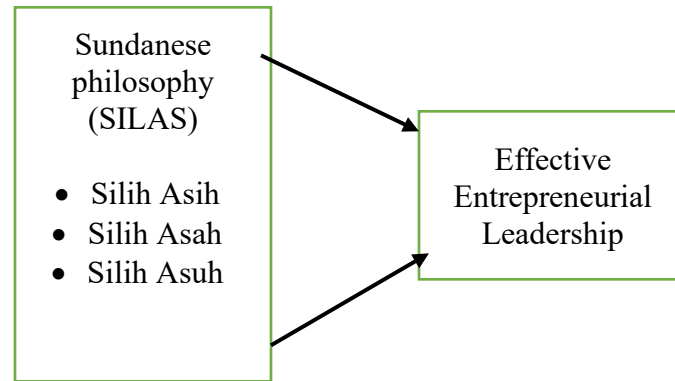
Figure 1: Research framework

3. Methods

This study investigated the unique attitude of the young entrepreneurs in the Sundanese society through the lens of thematic content. The data were acquired through in-depth interviews with three recent graduates who have established their enterprises for three years. The respondents were purposefully chosen for a variety of reasons, including their favorable business prospects. Nvivo was used to code the interview transcript to aid in the analysis process.

4. Data Collection

The data were acquired through interview sessions with entrepreneurs in focus groups. Respondents were specifically chosen to meet predetermined criteria. The following conditions must be met:

- Respondents were selected from a newly formed graduate program in entrepreneurship. The freshly graduated entrepreneurial program has a solid educational basis and a thorough understanding of entrepreneurship on an academic level. This qualification was chosen to ensure that no possibilities are lost during the debate, as they have a firm grasp on business and a variety of entrepreneurial issues.
- Founder and operator of a profitable entrepreneurial venture that has been operating for more than a year. The respondents have past experience founding and successfully operating a new firm from the beginning. This is a crucial experience. This illustrates that they have already overcome various adversities, most notably the covid epidemic.
- The firm is prosperous and has a bright future. Their venture is established for a long-term, with a steady cash flow and promising future prospects.

The method used was focus group discussion. A list of questions about adopted Sundanese leadership in an entrepreneurial context was developed based on literature. The research questions were adopted from a previous study on Sundanese Leadership in West Java (Mulyani & Ratnapuri, 2018). The Focus Group Discussion was video and audiotaped. Table 1 demonstrate the respondents' profile.

Table 1: Profile of the respondents

Initial	Age	Industry	Years of establishment
MJ	22	foreign exchange Apps	2019
AV	25	F&B	2020
MF	22	F&B	2020

5. Results and Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the entrepreneurial leadership behavior values of small business owners utilizing a Sundanese values framework. The data were processed in a sequential fashion. The study began with descriptive coding, which categorized the data. Following that, the resulting groups were refined through multiple levels of interpretive coding in order to uncover overarching themes. The NVIVO software was the major instrument for data coding used to establish a database derived from structured and formatted interview data. It was used to

highlight brief and meaningful comments after reading a transcript. Following that, first descriptive codes were created based on these remarks. Then, descriptive codes were re-evaluated, and any overlapped codes were merged or redefined. This procedure was performed multiple times, and once no further modifications to the codes were possible, the following stage of analysis began. As was the case with descriptive coding, interpretive codes were checked and, where necessary, redefined to accurately represent the textual meanings. The analysis was concluded through a comparative method in which descriptive and interpretative codes were studied separately and then combined to generate overarching themes. Theoretical conceptions and constructs concerning the study began to emerge at this phase in the investigation. In terms of interview, certain topics which were similar were blended, whereas others were classified as unique. Each discovered theme was broken further into subthemes by using descriptive and interpretive codes. Then, the obtained coding typology was used to create, a thematic framework for entrepreneurial leadership cultural values. Independent researchers independently verified the accuracy of all produced codes. The results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: The Data Interpretation Result

Descriptive	Interpretative code	Overarching Code
Capable of exerting control over their emotions during communication	*Animan* (gentle)	*Silih Asih*
When facing some difficulties, they never give up, keep trying on some solution and learn the new knowledge from other start-ups	*Leukeun* (perseverance).	
Capable of resolving issues	*Widagda (*wise and rational)	
Capable of empathizing	*Asih (*kindness. Loving)	
Capable of using compassion and empathy	*Karunya (*full of affection)	
Capacity of acquiring massive knowledge	*Mahiman* (Insightful)	*Silih Asah*
Able to define a variety of alternatives	*Lagiman* (skillful)	
Keep trying to learn from any sources	*Prakamya (*diligent and tenacious)	
Honest and brave to acknowledge their limited capability	*Isitwa* (honest)	
Able to work hard and build their business from zero, enjoying every step.	*Morogol-rogol (*Enthusiastic)	
Able to take the initiative to organize	*Langsitan, rapekan (*pro-active)	
Able to take the decision precisely, considering the priority	*Ahiman (*firm)	*Silih Asuh*
Able to handle difficult situations that occurs in the organization, prioritizing a personal approach handling their employees' misbehavior.	*Mupreruk (*calming)	

From the data analysis, several values from entrepreneurial leadership are related to Sundanese values. The perspective of entrepreneurial leaders about certain behavior requirements could be categorized as a dimension of Sundanese values such as *Silih Asih, Silih Asah, Silih Asuh*. During the interview, these values emerged as the requirement to be implemented by leaders in entrepreneurial firms.

● *Silih asih*

Silih asih in Sundanese leadership concept refers to affection and care to the subordinate, prioritizing the environment. This study found that this viewpoint influence the Sundanese young entrepreneurs. The dimension of *silih asih* in entrepreneurial leadership consists of *Animan* (gentle), *Leukeun* (perseverance), *Widagda (*wise and rational), *Asih (*kindness. Loving), *Karunya (*full of affection). These characteristics refer to the leaders' capability of exerting control over their emotions during communication. They never give up and keep trying on some solutions and learning new knowledge from other start-ups. They are capable of resolving issues, empathizing, and using compassion and empathy in their leadership.

In new business, leaders have significant and essential roles in keeping the business on track. MJ asserted that to maintain company growth up to the current level, leadership is the crucial key. A leader in an entrepreneurial firm cannot be '*sakleng*" person. *Sakleng* refers to straight forwardness in presenting point. In line with MJ, AV and MF are also concerned on being more flexible with the employees. Discipline is a good point, but being tolerant is a side of humanism that we must consider more—financial investment is not the main factor in a start-up company, in fact, building good relationship with people and reaching their hearts for engagement and loyalty with the company is more meaningful.

Empathy is the key for Entrepreneurial Leaders to be more engaged with their employees. For new entrepreneurs, their firms mean everything to them, but they realize that their employees have their own private lives that they have to respect. The leaders has to control themselves to keep calm in any situation. They have boundaries and limitations in expecting the contribution of their employees.

- *Silih asah*

Silih asah in Sundanese Leadership concept refers to leadership that highly appreciates the importance of knowledge, continuously improving the abilities and knowledge possessed by themselves and their subordinates. The dimension of *silih asih* in entrepreneurial leadership consists of *Mahiman* (Insightful), *Lagiman* (skillful), *Prakamya (*diligent and tenacious), *Isitwa* (honet), *Morogol-rogol (*Enthusiastic), *Langsitan, rapekan (*pro-active). These characteristics refer to the capacity for massive knowledge acquisition, ability to define a variety of alternatives, ability for continuous learning from any source, ability to be honest and boldness to acknowledge their limited capability, work hard and build their businesses from zero, enjoying every step and taking the initiative to organize.

Silih asah concept in entrepreneurial firm emerges clearly in the mindset of the entrepreneurial leaders. They have a strong passion for improving themselves, aspiring to acquire more knowledge than their followers to help and guide them to execute the job properly. They also have a clear vision of their profiles. They know that they have some limitations, so learning from others is necessary.

- *Silih asuh*

The word "*asuh*" refers to care, protect, and nurture. *Silih asuh* in Sundanese Leadership concept refers to leadership based on compassion to protect, maintain, and care for members of the organization. Hence, the organization is able to generate a sense of trust and mutual respect. The dimension of *silih asuh* in entrepreneurial leadership consists of *Ahiman (*firm) and *Mupreruk (*calming). These characteristics refer to the leaders' capability of making decision precisely, considering the priority, handling the difficult situations occurred, utilizing personal approach toward their employees. The entrepreneurial leaders, adhering to the Sundanese concept believe that they have great responsibility for their firms, as well as the firm members. The priority is to maintain a good relationship with others in order, to preserve the healthy ecosystem. Togetherness and family relationship concept are the central themes of their daily operation.

6. Conclusion

This study has analyzed the entrepreneurial leadership behavior values of entrepreneurial small business owners by using the Sundanese values framework. Data are processed in a series of steps. The analysis begins with descriptive coding, where data are organized into meaningful groups. The emerging groups are then refined through successive stages of interpretive coding to identify overarching themes. The primary tool used for data coding is the NVIVO software package. Based on the focus group discussion, several Sundanese values are found in the entrepreneurial leaders' daily attitude and behavior. The results show that culture influences entrepreneurial leaders' behavior. Besides, several values of entrepreneurial leaders are relevant to Sundanese values. The perspective of entrepreneurial leaders for certain behavior requirements are attributed to the dimension of Sundanese values. These values are deemed essential for leaders in entrepreneurial firms. In addition, several attitudes of the entrepreneurial leaders could thematically cluster around the Sundanese dimension, such as *silih asah, silih asih, and silih asuh.*

This study offers authentic values of the Sundanese dimensions of entrepreneurial leaders which have not been research before by using the thematic analysis method. It also contributes to cultural leadership and entrepreneurial leadership research by providing a specific cultural perspectives that might have differed if implemented in other countries or regions.

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Biographies

Mulyani Karmagatri is a Lecturer of the Entrepreneurship Program at Bina Nusantara University. She graduated from the Doctoral of the economic program. She has a passion for research about entrepreneurship and leadership. Scopus ID: 57210743902, Orchid ID: 0000-0001-9730-1499. She is a Dance Entrepreneur with twenty years of experience in dance education and the dance performance industry.

Hazmilah Hasan, PhD is a Senior Lecturer at Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka (UTeM), Malaysia. Her research interest is topic related to technology management, social sciences, human communication, personal development, gender issues in the workplace, enterprise skills, and others of interest in human development. Her ORCID ID: 0000-0001-7684-3969.

Andreas Chang graduated from Edith Cowan University, Australia. Chang is a certified trainer for Lateral Thinking. His research field is Entrepreneurship, motivation, education, and design thinking.