



The Influence of Japanese Leadership Style on Employee Performance and The Mediating Role of Employee Engagement at Japanese firm in Indonesia (Study among Indonesian Employee in Japanese Company)

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ABSTRACT

In an era of globalization, Indonesia has become one of the major recipients of Japanese investments in South-East Asia. Based on the underlying cross-culture perspective, expatriate managers from Japan meet many challenges of leading employees in host country. This study aims to examine the influence of Japanese leadership style on employee performance, and the Mediating Role of Employee Engagement at Japanese firm in Indonesia. Based on quantitative approach, the theoretical model and hypotheses in this study were tested using empirical data gathered from 201 employees, through survey questionnaires and analyzed using the correlation coefficients and regression analyses. The sample of this study was selected through non-probability (convenience sampling). This study confirmed that there is a positive strong correlation Japanese Leadership Style and Employee Engagement on Employee performance. The association between Japanese leadership style and employee performance is significantly mediated by employee engagement. Findings also suggest that, this study should be of value to human resource practitioners interested in improving the level of employee engagement and employee performance among culturally diverse work groups.

Keywords: Leadership Style, Performance, Engagement

INTRODUCTION

The world which we live in is becoming more interconnected. As a Leading Organization must have to adapt to this evolving landscape to survive or perish. That phenomenon attributed to Globalization. Leadership in the 21st century is influenced by a few megaprocesses, namely, globalization, political change in the world order, and innovation/technology (Padilla, 2012). The role of leaders in today's organizations has changed and the success of any organization relies on the leadership styles practiced by the leaders. According to Mintzberg (2010) true leaders engage others with their consideration and modesty because they involve themselves in what they are actually doing not for individual gains.

Leadership skills and practices which are effective in one country may be useless in another due to differences in cultural beliefs and values. The Globalization era has created challenges for a leader from different country with their own values & cultures to lead in a different places. Recorded in 2017 there were more than 1,750 Japanese companies in Indonesia with business activities in manufacturing, infrastructure, and services (tempo.co). In other words, Indonesian employees in Japanese Company in Indonesia being lead by expatriate from Japan.

This cross cultural leadership is a complex, changing, uncertain, and ambiguous global environment escalates challenges to global leaders. Abbe et al., (2007) defines cross-cultural leadership as a psychological attempt for understanding how different people from distinct cultures interact efficiently and effectively with each other. It brings an insight of understanding leaders who have their business operations on a global platform.

Economic developments in the ASEAN region have been so remarkable today that it has led to the area becoming an important economical region for Japan. For Indonesia it is the first time in 21 years that it forms the preferred choice of overseas investments for Japanese companies, thus replacing China. In 2013, Japan already dominates foreign direct investment in Indonesia. According to a survey of the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), 44.9 percent of respondents assessed Indonesia as the most promising investment destination for the next three years. The respondents in this survey involved 500 Japanese companies that engage in international businesses.

Investors from Japan have controlled shares of 8 national banks in Indonesia based on "Otoritas Jasa Keuangan" (OJK). Professor of the Faculty of Economics, Universitas Hasanuddin said, the increasing interest of Japanese financial companies in Indonesia was quite massive. The potential of financial industry in Indonesia is still high, the prospect of profit margins in Indonesia is very large. The average of net interest margin (NIM) of banks in Indonesia is around 7% -8%. Whereas in Japan it is only under 1% and sometimes even 0%. So they will look for a large credit market with a large profit as well. (Bisnis.com)

Foreign investment from Japan in Indonesia is the second highest after Singapore, which amounted to 4,276 projects in 2018. The number of Foreign Workers (TKA) in Indonesia according to IMTA, until the end of 2017 reached 85,974 workers. The number of Japanese expatriates in Indonesia is one of the largest in Indonesia, China occupies the first position, then Japan in second place. IMTA data shows that workers from Japan in 2017 reached 13,540 workers or around 16.8 percent of the total number of registered expatriate in Indonesia (katadata.co.id)

When leadership theories are focusing on how individual leader impose influence on the followers, Japanese leadership describes the leader-follower relationship as integrated and indivisible. As such, to understand Japanese leadership, it is imperative to study it from organizational culture perspective than of its top leadership's will. *Mikoshi* leadership, *Genba* Leadership and *Jinmyaku* Leadership are among three Japanese leadership models that can be derived from the Japanese culture (Yusuf, Othman, 2016).

Neuliep, Chaudoir, and McCroskey (2001) said that "nationalism" in Japan is remarkably similar to current conceptions of ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrism creates problems in part because people expect others to think and behave as they do (Stephan & Stephan, 2001). Japanese Leadership Style with ethnocentrism might could caused problem in internal relationship between Japanese and Indonesian employees.

There are issues on japanese employee engagement. Japanese tend to come lowest in terms of engagement and trust. For example - in Gallup's 20011-2012 global survey of 142 countries and 20,000 people, only 7% of Japanese employee are engaged, 69% not engaged, 24% actively disengaged. Compare to the western; USA 30% engaged, 52% not engaged, 18% actively disengaged. Japan's percentages are not far off China, so maybe it's an "Asian" thing, you might

think. But another survey by Aon Hewitt looking just at Asia Pacific levels of engagement found that Japan – at 33% actively disengaged – had the lowest engagement score.

Most of the empirical research showed consistent relationship between leadership styles, employee performance, and Employee Engagement. Based on the problems mentioned above this paper will identify the influence of Japanese Leadership Style on Employee Performance, and The Mediating Role of Employee Engagement at Japanese Company in Indonesia. This will be clarified by analyzing the collected data from a questionnaire-sheet for the Indonesian employees working in Japanese companies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Japanese Leadership Style

Mikoshi Leadership

The seek for conformity and harmony in Japanese society brings out a fundamental question; as leadership provides authority and power to one, or a small group of people thus providing a separation of rank, how do actually Japanese view leadership? Yoshimura & Anderson (1997) described leadership in Japan as a *mikoshi* (a divine palanquin carried by people to transport deity throughout town in festivals). A *mikoshi* is respected and influential because it carries the spirit of God, but it does not go anywhere unless it is being carried by people [Ono, 2004]. The analogy tells us that top managers are essential because they portray the image (spirit) of the company as leaders, but they must follow where the consensus of the middle management wants them to go and function principally to help middle management achieve communal goals. This deviates from the current concept of leadership that has always emphasize on the influence of a particular person (leader) on the follower (Yusuf, Othman, 2016)

The concept of *mikoshi* leadership also reflects the people who carry it. *Mikoshi* bearers must be about the same height and move in uniform steps towards the same direction when carrying the *mikoshi*. The loud shout of “wasshoi” in unison to pep one another in upheaving the heavy *mikoshi* on every step forward creates a commune energy that one can feel deep inside oneself. It symbolizes how people (the followers) share the difficulties, hardships, richness, and happiness of their lives through uniformity, conformity and harmony (Ono, 2004)

Genba Leadership

Genba is the actual shared space (physical, virtual, mental or their combination) for knowledge creation through interactions (Nonaka, 1998), where action happens and people meet. The concept of *genba* is allied to *genchi genbutsu*, which involves going to the actual place (*genchi*) to check on the relevant objects (*genbutsu*). This approach was coined by Taiichi Ohno, the creator of Toyota Production System (Imai, 2012). Leaders must understand what is happening at *genba* by being observant and sensitive to physical and social cues at *genba*. This will enable them to detect problems at early stage, or even sense it before it occurs and consequently plan for problem-solving (Imai, 2012). Because work is a normative commitment, *genba* leaders also place informal barriers and nurture cross-functional collaboration by promoting communications.

Jinmyaku Leadership

Inclination towards team-oriented and self/group protective style leadership (House) predicts that leadership in Japan maintains the central focus on relationship even for the purpose of C&I. Harryson (2006) argued that organizations that utilize the concept of know-who besides know-how are able to expedite the sophisticated processes for innovation. While know-how is the ability to solve problems efficiently based primarily on internally accumulated knowledge,

experience and skills, “know-who” is the ability to acquire, transform and apply that “know-how” through personal relationships (Harryson, 2006).

Employee Performance

Aguinis (2014) said that performance is multidimensional, meaning that we need to consider many different types of behaviors to understand performance. Although we can identify many specific behaviors, two types of behaviors or performance facets stand out: task performance and contextual performance.

Contextual and task performance must be considered separately because they do not necessarily occur in tandem. An employee can be highly proficient at her task, but be an underperformer regarding contextual performance. Task performance is defined as activities that transform raw materials into the goods and services that are produced by the organization. Activities that help with the transformation process by replenishing the supply of raw materials, distributing its finished products, or providing important planning, coordination, supervising, or staff functions that enable the organization to function effectively and efficiently. Contextual performance is defined as those behaviors that contribute to the organization’s effectiveness by providing a good environment in which task performance can occur. Contextual performance includes behaviors such as the following:

- persisting with enthusiasm and exerting extra effort as necessary to complete one’s own task activities successfully (e.g., being punctual and rarely absent, expending extra effort on the job)
- volunteering to carry out task activities that are not formally part of the job (e.g., suggesting organizational improvements, making constructive suggestions) helping and cooperating with others (e.g., assisting and helping coworkers and customers)
- following organizational rules and procedures (e.g., following orders and regulations, showing respect for authority, complying with organizational values and policies)
- endorsing, supporting, and defending organizational objectives (e.g., organizational loyalty, representing the organization favorably to outsiders)

Both task and contextual performance are important dimensions to take into account in performance management systems.

Employee Engagement

An engaged employee is considered to be emotionally attached to the organization, is passionate about his or her work, and cares about the success of the organization (Seijts and Crim, 2006) Macey and Schneider (2008) defined employee engagement as a desirable condition among employees that encompasses the following attributes (1) has an organizational purpose, (2) connotes involvement, commitment, passion, enthusiasm, focused effort and energy, and (3) involves both attitude and behavioural components. While work engagement involves employees’ optimistic vibes towards their work, employee engagement deals with employees’ positive feelings towards the organization. Apparently, employee engagement and work engagement are often used interchangeably in the literature partly due to the indistinct psychological needs and job satisfaction that are associated with both constructs (Schaufeli, 2013). Nevertheless, engagement is theoretically distinguishable from other often overlapping constructs; namely, organizational commitment, citizenship behaviour and job involvement (Saks, 2006).

For purposes of this study, the researcher uses the Schaufeli et al., definition of engagement: [Engagement is] a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption. Rather than a momentary and specific state, engagement refers to a more persistent and pervasive affective-cognitive state that is not focused on any particular object, event, individual, or behavior. Vigor is characterized by high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness to invest effort in one's work, and persistence even in the face of difficulties. Dedication is characterized by a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge. . . .The final dimension of engagement, absorption, is characterized by being fully concentrated and deeply engrossed in one's work, whereby time passes quickly and one has difficulties with detaching oneself from work. (Schaufeli et al., 2002, pp. 74-75)

Employees who demonstrate engagement as defined by Schaufeli, et al. represent a valuable resource for leaders who understand what it takes to reach the vision and mission of the organization.

As several research has shown engaged employees are critical to the success of an organization, it follows that organizations want to know if they have an engaged workforce. Two engagement instruments commonly used to assess employee engagement include, the Gallup Q12, previously called the Gallup Workplace Audit (Harter et al., 2002) and the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale or UWES (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). While both are recognized and used internationally to assess employee engagement, the UWES is often used due to its low cost, ease of availability and demonstrated validity in measuring engagement (Harter et al., 2002; The individual in the changing working life,2008, pp. 380-404; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Because of these factors, the researcher has chosen to use the UWES.

Relation among Japanese leadership Style and Employee performance

There are many great things about Japanese workplace culture – lifetime employment, teamwork, long range planning, and the dedication to kaizen – but the expectation to fit in, save face, and give your soul to the company comes at a price. Results of previous research indicate a positive association exists among leadership technique and organizational effectiveness [Brand C, Heyl G, Maritz D (2000). Walumbwa et al. (2008) highlighted that leadership had direct impact on managerial performance in banking sector. A large numbers of researches have explored and examined the influence of leadership technique on work performance in different sectors [Chuang, 2007].

The most important function of any organization is to enhance his job employee's performance so that it could compete in highly competitive atmosphere. Numerous representation and theories have been offered to ascertain a connection among the style of leadership and work performance (Vigoda, Gadot, 2007). Leaders put all their effort to offer full encouragement and support to their employees. Past research work has established that Japanese leadership technique is interlinked with employee's engagement and productivity. In present competitive scenario, where basic requirement for organizational success is creativity and innovation, therefore, leadership style has become less effective. Every leadership style has his own influence and results in terms of employee performance (Yammarino FJ, Spangler WD, Dubinsky AJ (1998).

Hypothesis 1: Japanese leadership style has positive impact on Employee performance.

Voon et al. (2011) highlighted that employees feel more engaged with their work if realize that their work is satisfying and rewarding. Employee Performance ultimately influences the work performance and success of organization. (Rezvani A, Chang A, Wiewiora A, Ashkanasy NM, Jordan PJ, et al. (2016).

Japanese leadership Style association with Employee Engagement

Effective leaders believe and research confirms that employees, especially those who directly interact with customers have an increasing effect on an organizations success (Gostick & Elton, 2009; Heyman, 2010; Hsieh, 2010). Engaged employees serve as a valuable resource in understanding customer needs and creating organizational capabilities that support and align the mission of the organization and the needs of the customer. Effective leaders believe and research confirms that employees, especially those who directly interact with customers have an increasing effect on an organizations success (Gostick & Elton, 2009; Heyman, 2010; Hsieh, 2010).

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In addition to Oakley's (2004) research findings, additional engagement research show that leaders who demonstrate higher levels of empowerment tend to have higher engaged employees with lower turnover intention (van Schalkwyk, du Toit, Bothma, & Rothmann, 2010). Based on the research findings, organizational leaders must understand how to engage employees so organizations can create sustainable capabilities to accomplish the mission of the organization (Beehr, Glazer, Fischer, Linton, & Hansen, 2009). Finally, organizations with highly engaged employees have higher financial returns (Beehr et al., 2009; Fleming & Asplund, 2007; Harter et al., 2002; Many employees would fire their boss, 2007; Oakley, 2004; Xanthopoulou et al., 2009).

Hypothesis 2: Japanese leadership style has positive impact on Employee Engagement.

Employee Engagement association between employee performance and Employee Engagement as mediator among Japanese Leadership Style and employee performance

Most organizations are – in the very least – open to the idea of growth. However, chances are, if your employees are *just shy* of engaged at work, the company will be *this close* to getting that big new client. According to *The Impact of Employee Engagement on Performance*, a study by HBR, 71% of respondents agree that employee engagement is very important to the overall success of the organization. (Harvard, 2013)

Research links employee engagement directly to productivity. A 2009 study by the University of Iowa and Gallup revealed an 18% drop in productivity among most and least engaged employees. The same survey also noted a connection between absenteeism and engagement: it's 37% higher among employees with engagement scores in the lowest quartile. A study from Glint shows the turnover rate of disengaged employees is 12 times higher than that of highly engaged employees. The implications of losing top performers can significantly impact productivity, not to mention the potential financial ramifications of trying to replace them: the University of Florida states the cost of turnover can reach up to 150% of an employee's salary. Aon Hewitt data shows highly-engaged employees are 36% more likely to stay with their company.

Raising employee engagement can help improve your operational efficiency. Perhaps the most compelling evidence of employee engagement's impact on performance is its link to stock performance. Forbes describes a 3.9 times earnings per share growth rate between companies with employees who have the highest engagement levels versus the lowest.

In most companies, today's leaders are acutely aware that there is much to be done to ensure that they have a focused and highly engaged workforce. Connecting engagement to business performance requires considerable effort and top management focus—and, to a large degree, it is about how you do it. But there is enormous opportunity for companies that get it right.

On above mentioned point of view, research recommends that leadership technique helps in enhancing job fulfillment and as result workers performance will also be enhanced (Figure 1). Therefore, Employee Engagement may act as mediator in the connection between technique of leadership and employee performance (Kozlowski SW, Ilgen DR, 2006). However, it is significant to examine this relationship; reasonably less research work has highlighted team processes such a steam-building as mediator among Japanese leadership style connection with employee performance (Chou HW, Lin YH, Chang HH, Chuang WW, 2013). Hence, following hypothesis is offered:

Hypothesis 3: Employee Engagement has positive impact on employee performance.

Hypothesis 4 : Employee Engagement has positive mediation role among Japanese Leadership and employee performance.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study. Above mentioned research model highlights association between Japanese leadership style Independent Variable (IV), employee performance Dependent Variable (DV) and Employee Engagement Mediating Variable (MV). Model indicates that Japanese leadership style has positive influence on employee performance and engagement. Employee Engagement is positively influencing employee performance, basing upon this H1, H2 and H3 are offered.

METHOD

The objective of this study is to establish the impact of Japanese leadership on employee performance with Employee engagement of Indonesian Employee located in Bank X, Jakarta Branch. Bank X is Japan's Largest Bank and one of the world's largest. Data was collected by using questionnaire method. Japanese leadership style (IV) questionnaire was adopted from Yusof & Othman (2016). The questionnaire consisted of 6 five point Likert scale from 1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree was used to quantify this variable.

The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale or UWES (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004) was used for this research, and questionnaire consisted of 5 point Likert scale from 1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree was used to quantify this variable. Employee performance (DV) questionnaire was adopted from Aguinis (2014). This Questionnaire and five point Likert scale. For checking questionnaire reliability and validity, firstly 50 questionnaires were disseminated for pilot testing (Table 1). After pilot testing details reliability data of each variable is shown as under:

Variable	Cronbach Alpha
Japanese Leadership Style	0.884
Employee Performance	0.883
Employee Engagement	0.883

Tabel 1. Pilot testing details reliability data of each variable.

Keeping in view research targets, Bank X is the Largest Bank in Japan and one of the World's Largest, and Bank X, Jakarta branch were chosen as research population. All Indonesian employees are the population of this research. Personally administered questionnaire were

disseminated among 303 employees and of those 201 questionnaires were received back, and found correctly and completely filled.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

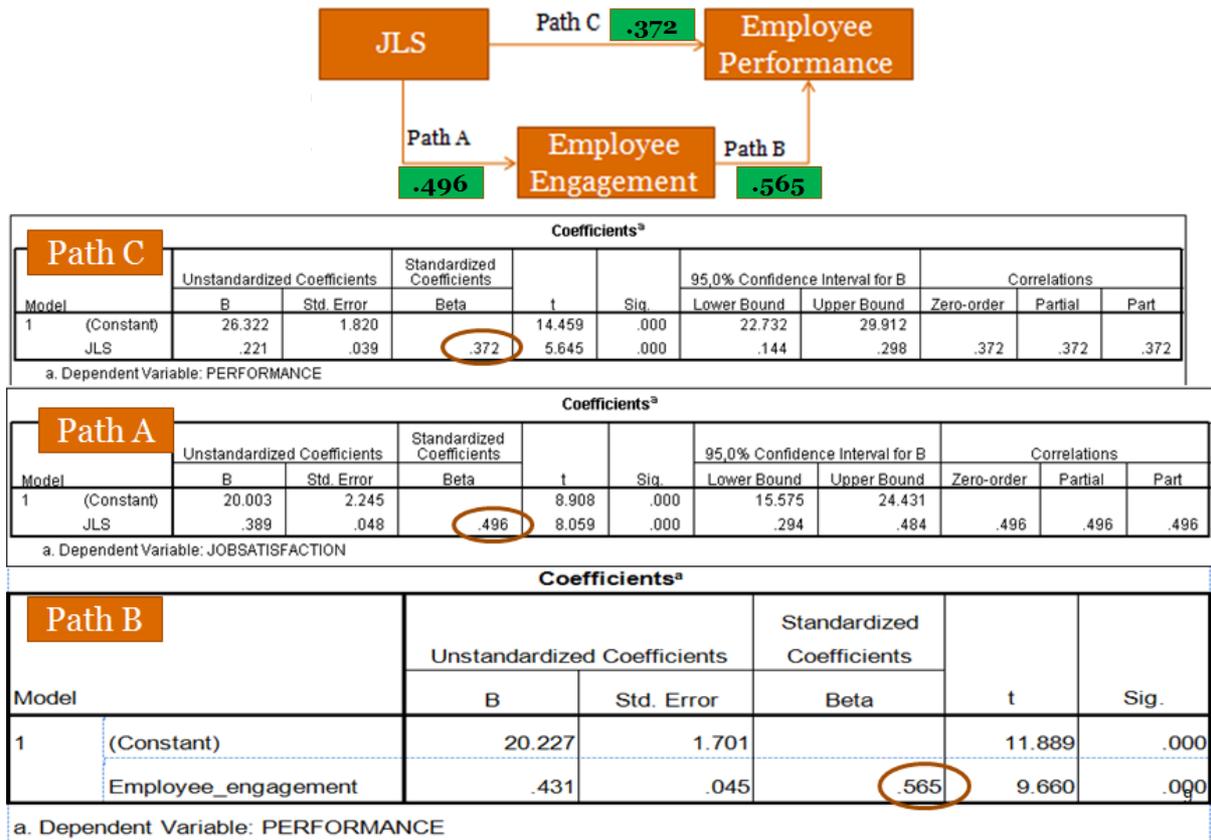


Figure 1. Questionnaire Result

- Japanese leadership style correlated Employee performance by 0.372**, which shows positively significant correlation among both variables.
- Japanese Leadership Style and Employee Engagement correlated by 0.496**, which highlights a positive significant correlation among both variables.
- Employee Engagement and Employee Performance correlated by 0.565**, which highlights a positive significant correlation among both variables.

Input:	Test statistic:	Std. Error:	p-value:
a .389	Sobel test: 5.15144388	0.02620294	2.6e-7
b .347	Aroian test: 5.12823017	0.02632156	2.9e-7
s _a .048	Goodman test: 5.17497572	0.02608379	2.3e-7
s _b .052	Reset all	Calculate	

Figure 2. Sobel Test Result

It means that the mediator of employee engagement significantly explained that the Employee Engagement were determined by the JLS with the help of the mediator (Employee Engagement)

The idea of this research was to discover the influence among Japanese leadership style (IV) and employee performance (DV) through Employee Engagement as mediator.

As predicted, it was established JLS (IV) plays a significant role in employee performance (DV). JLS inspire influences and motivate employees towards higher performance, through their Employee engagement. Current research this finding concurs the preceding literature which highlights that JLS has a positive association with employee performance which leads towards recognition of **Hypothesis 1**.

Hypothesis 2 tested the positive association of JLS with Employee Engagement. After this research it can be highlighted that worker engagement will occur if leader is successful in applying his leadership skills. This research finding is highlighted that this leadership techniques enhances engagement between employees and the organisation. JLS techniques will assist to make sure workers engagement which will in turn will ensure elevate workers performance.

Hypothesis 3, all other results are also similar and aligned with earlier studies which indicated that employee engagement has a positive impact upon employee performance. When workers will be more engaged with their work, they are going to execute their work with more keenness and devotion to make sure successful execution of allocated work.

Hypothesis 4. Mediation hypothesis reflected that association between JLS and employee performance is mediated by Employee Engagement Existing literature recognized that Employee engagement is observed as vital factor in enhancing manager's competence, effectiveness and his leadership style techniques to augment worker's engagement as well as his effectiveness towards his work which may lead to workers performance.

CONCLUSION

Leadership training must focus on rising Employee Engagement among Indonesian employees for achieving utmost results and benefits. Although, research objectives have been achieved but still in future after integrating more relevant variables associated to employee performance and results assessment regarding Employee engagement on overall workers performance and performance of the organization can further explain the association. This study should be of value to human resource practitioners interested in improving the level of employee engagement and employee performance among culturally diverse work groups.

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