STUDY OF WORKPLACE FRIENDSHIP FACTORS IN INDONESIA'S PERSPECTIVE FOR JAPANESE MNC IN INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

The existence of Multinational Companies (MNC) is already common in today's era. Despite the successes and benefits of MNC's existence, a number of issues are still frequently encountered as a result of cultural differences between members of the organization. These differences, if not addressed properly, will interfere workplace relationships, which will ultimately interfere the organization's daily activities. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to identify the dominant factor of workplace relationship from the point of view of Indonesian for MNC from Japan operating in Indonesia, in this case in Jababeka industrial area, Bekasi, Indonesia. This study began on June 2013 until September 2016, at 2 (two) Japanese heavy equipment MNC's, and applied Constructivism research paradigm, Inductive (Qualitative) research methodology. Observation, participant observation, and in-depth interviews were used as research techniques. This study also implemented Emergent Theory and Processual Approach. This study included 18 Indonesian employee informants, The production section employees was taken as the focal point of the study. Once the data obtained, a set of analysis with the tools of Word Counts, Cluster Analysis and Word Cloud applied. This study resulted 2 (two) important dimensions, namely (1) similar local items and (2) similar informal activities.

Keywords: workplace relationship, Japanese MNC, Indonesia's perspective, similar local items, similar informal activities

1. INTRODUCTION

It has been known that communication is one of the important element, especially within business organizations. Many experts have expressed their opinion on this matter. Rosenbaum (2005) said that there are many ways to describe the definition of communication. However, predominantly, there will be the fundamental nature of information being transmitted. This will include a verbal or nonverbal messages, and the process to make the information can be exchanged among individuals in the course of a common system of signs, symbols, or behavior.

Communication also takes place in an organization, as well as multinational companies. McCroskey (2005) defines communication within organizations as a process in which individuals try to express something to other individuals, verbally or nonverbally in the context of formal organizations. At this instant, the word 'process', that was mentioned above, indicates that communication is dynamic and almost always change, in line with the individual change and/or organizational change.

The illustration above is also in formation with the statement of Ali and Haider (2012) which stated that organizational communication is a dynamic process and this will involve a number of communication channels, techniques and also networks.

Within the organization, the communication between superior-subordinate (especially foreign superior and local subordinate) will not just involve upward and downward communication direction, but they will communicate with each other in a number of ways at different level. It can be formal or informal, verbal or nonverbal, and written or oral. Considering the illustration above, it is understandable if the quality of relationships (workplace friendship) among employees will contribute significantly in facilitating this communication process.

In connection with the topic discussed above, some scholars found that there were problems, especially in MNC (MultiNational Companies), such as:

1.   Language barrier, this is a very common problem that occur in numerous organization especially MNC, this causes miscommunication and inhibits the establishment of good relationships between superior-subordinate, or among employees (Erkkila, 2010, Feely & Anne-Wil Harzing, 2002).

2.   Respect of the ideas, knowledge and cultural differences. It is important for the manager or superior in MNC to respect these differences in order to built good rapport (Bloch & Whiteley, 2009, Forssberg & Malm, 2001).

3.   Conflict concerning High Context Culture (HCC) and Low Context Culture (LCC). Usually, the message is interpreted profoundly derived from overall situation, and as a result

the spoken messages can be ambiguous or vague. In HCC, a central value is placed in non-verbal cues, whereas in LCC rely more on the explicit verbal expression. Again, these differences may hamper good relationships. (Erkilla, 2010, Geddie, 1994).

Another issues that have been discussed in relation to communication studies in organizations, especially multinational corporations, can be seen in the following table.

Table I. Issues in Multinational Companies Communication

Year	Authors	Issues
1999	Jody A Worley, Lawrence L. Bailey, Richard C Thompson, Kurt M Joseph, Clara A William	Communication, Organizational Trust, Technological Change, Organizational Change
2008	Sirkka L Jarvenpaa	Global Teams, Virtual Organization, Trust, Group Development
2010	Vesa Peltokorpi	Cultural Value, Intercultural Communication, Language
2010	Linda Erkkila	Cross-cultural Communication, Internal Communication, MNC, Language Barrier
2011	Rachid Zeffane, Syed A Tipu, James C Ryan	Trust, Communication Effectiveness, Organizational Commitment, Loyalty
2011	Shahrina Md Nordin, Mohammed Halib, Zulkipli Ghazali	Communication Climate, Superiory Communication, Subordinate Communication, Horizontal Communicatin, Trust, Media Quality
2012	Akbar Ali, Jahanzaib Haider	Organizational Communication, Job Satisfaction, Communication Climate, Trust, Opennes

Source: References

From the description above, it appears clearly that issues of trust, group development, language barrier and certainly culture are important issues in organizational communication. Therefore, it is understandable that the contribution of workplace relationship quality is increasingly significant. This is also in line with the results of Xerri, Nelson and Brunetto (2015) research, which states that perceived organizational support was positively correlated

with an employee's attitude toward organizational change, and superior-subordinate relationships and perceived organizational support were positively correlated with an employee's emotional attachment to the organization. Therefore, a good conducive working atmosphere is needed, especially for MNC whose members of the organization have different cultural backgrounds, and this should be addressed properly.

2. WORKPLACE RELATIONSHIP

Workplace relationship is a unique interpersonal relationship within an organization. It has an important insinuation for the individual in the relationship and also the organization in which this relationship happen and develop. Numerous studies were conducted and indicated that workplace relationship directly contribute to worker's ability to work.

Because workers spend on average about 40 hours a week at work, these long hours will result in friendship in the workplace. This relationship can have a positive impact on employee performance. However, it can also happen in opposite direction.

Gordon and Hartman (2009) stated that, spending a lot of time at work, will result in friendship among employees in the workplace. Friendship is defined as a voluntary interdependence between two or more people over time. It is intended to facilitate the socio-emotional goals of the participants, and may involve different types and degrees of friendship, affection and mutual assistance.

According to Lee and Park (2006), friendship in the workplace can be called blended-friendship that can have a positive contribution on employee performance, and may lead to: increase of work cohesiveness, more satisfied and committed employees, increased productivity, increased goal attainment, increased positive feeling about organization, better job performance, and reduce the level of turn over.

However, in relation to workplace relationship, one of the most important relationships is, the relationship between superior and subordinates. This relationship is considered to have a major contribution on employee performance. Positive relationships can take the form of different types of exchanges between the superior and subordinates. That may include numerous activities, such as, discussing work-related issues, involvement in the decision-making process, availability of superiors at times when needed, and this may give a positive contribution on employee performance.

Effective superiors recognize everyone as individuals with different values and beliefs. Superiors need to realize that childhood experiences, ethnic backgrounds and religious heritage determine individual personality, values, and beliefs. Taking into account these

individual differences, a superior may avoid many misunderstandings and can have a more positive contribution to subordinates.

The discussion above is relevant to the existence of MNC in Indonesia. The superior from the origin country or from other countries should interact with the Indonesian employees. Differences may cause problems, subsequently it is necessary to know how to bridge these –at least- cultural differences or gap,

3. RESEARCH QUESTION

In sequence to the discussion above, the research questions that will be used in this particular study is: What are the workplace friendship factors in Indonesia's perspective for Japanese MNC in Indonesia

4. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The objective of this particular study is to identify the dominant factors of the workplace friendship factors in Indonesia's perspective for Japanese MNC in Indonesia

5. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STUDY

The implementation of this study began on June 2013 until September 2016, at 2 (two) Japanese heavy equipment MNC's in Jababeka Industrial Estate, Bekasi, Indonesia. This particular study applied Constructivism research paradigm, Inductive (Qualitative) research methodology. Observation, participant observation, and in-depth interviews were used as research techniques. This study also implemented Emergent Theory and Processual Approach which are considered to be very consistent with the objectives of the study.

Due to the limitation of the study, Indonesia is considered as one, eventhough Indonesia is consist of at around 17,000 islands, 1,128 tribes and 746 local languages. Taking into account that the location of study was in the West Java Province in Indonesia, the largest and second largest of population in Indonesia are Javanese (Java tribe) and Sundanese (Sunda tribe), then Indonesia will be represented by Javanese and Sundanese.

This study included 18 (eighteen) Indonesian employee informants, The production section employees was taken as the focal point of the study, because this section will determine the success of the business. No product no business. Once the data obtained (in according to enhance the credibility and dependability for this qualitative research, researcher applied triangulation, which assisted with another researcher), a set of analysis with the tools of Word Counts, Cluster Analysis and Word Cloud applied.

Gaur and Ebrahimi (2013) stated that Trust and Communication are the important dimensions for effective superior-subordinate relatonship. Therefore, these 2 (two) dimensions are used in this particular study to form the study protocol, as a basis during the study, as follows.

Table II. Protocol for the dimension of Trust

Year	Author/s	Dimension/s
2002	Shockley & Zalabak	(1) Accurate information, (2) Explanations for decisions, (3) openness
2005	Adler & Kranowitz	(1) Acknowledgement, (2) Disclosure, (3)Accountability, (4) Commitment
2008	Frederique Six & Ardnt Sorge	(1) Creation of a culture so that relationships are important and showing care and concern for the other person's needs is appreciated, (2) Facilitation of relational signalling among colleagues (vertically and horizontally), (3) Overt socializationfor newcomers, so that they understand the values and principles of the organization, (4) processes to manage, match and develop employees' professional competencies.

Source: references

Table III. Protocol for the dimension of Communication

Year	Author/s	Dimension/s
2011	Shahrina Md Nordin, Mohammed Halib & Zulkipli Ghazali	(1) communication climate, (2) superiory communication, (3) subordinate communication, (4) horizontal communication, (5) organizational perspective, (6) organizational integration and (7) media quality
2012	Akbar Ali & Jahanzaib Haider	(1) communication climate, (2) formal communication and (3) informal communication

Source: references

Study Protocol above was used as the basis for observation, participant observation and in-depth interview. In order to preserve the meaning of communication, all in-depth interviews are conducted in Bahasa Indonesia. As mentioned earlier, once the data collected, an analysis phase commenced with word counts, followed by cluster analysis, word cloud analysis, aided by nvivo software, and generated the following.

Table IV. Word Counts (1)

| Word	Length	Count	(%)
yang	4	19	2,76
atau	4	18	2,62
kita	4	16	2,33
saya	4	15	2,18
seperti	7	13	1,89
akan	4	12	1,74
asal	4	11	1,60
berdasarkan	11	11	1,60
bersepeda	9	11	1,60
berteman	8	11	1,60
kota	4	9	1,31
memang	6	9	1,31
memudahkan	10	9	1,31
propinsi	8	9	1,31

Similar Local Items

Source: analysis result

Table IV. Word Counts (2)

| Word	Length	Count	(%)
bersepeda	9	11	1,60
berteman	8	11	1,60
kota	4	9	1,31
memang	6	9	1,31
memudahkan	10	9	1,31
propinsi	8	9	1,31
teman	5	9	1,31
tidak	5	9	1,31
dalam	5	8	1,16
hobi	4	8	1,16
kegiatan	8	8	1,16
mendapat	8	8	1,16
mudah	5	8	1,16
satu	4	8	1,16
secara	6	8	1,16
umum	4	8	1,16
lingkungan	10	7	1,02
bahasa	6	6	0,87
orang	5	6	0,87
adanya	6	5	0,73
alam	4	5	0,73

Similar Informal Activities

Source: analysis result

Table V. Cluster Analysis
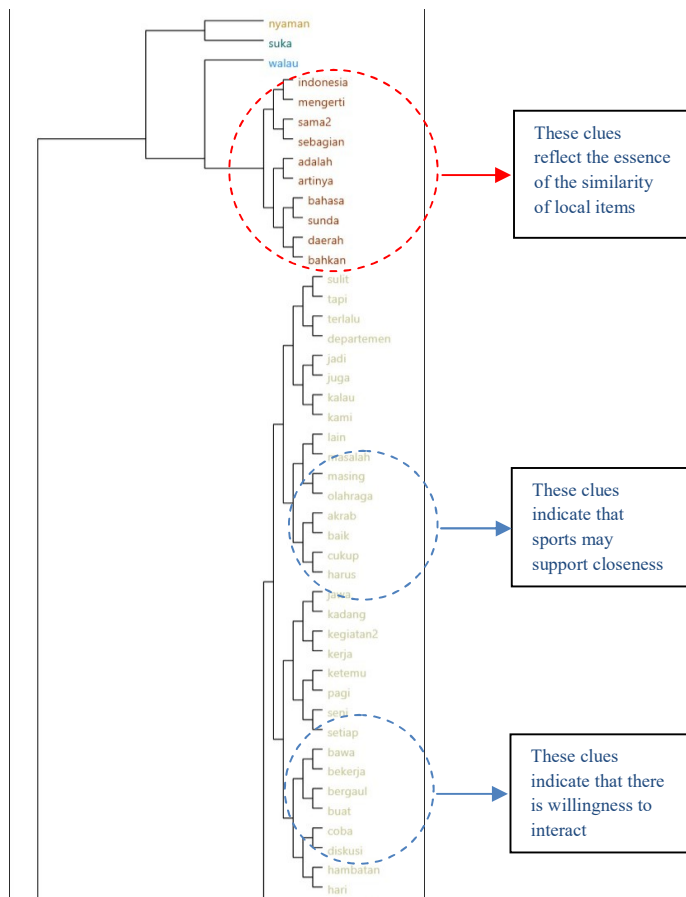
Source: analysis result

Table VI. Word Cloud
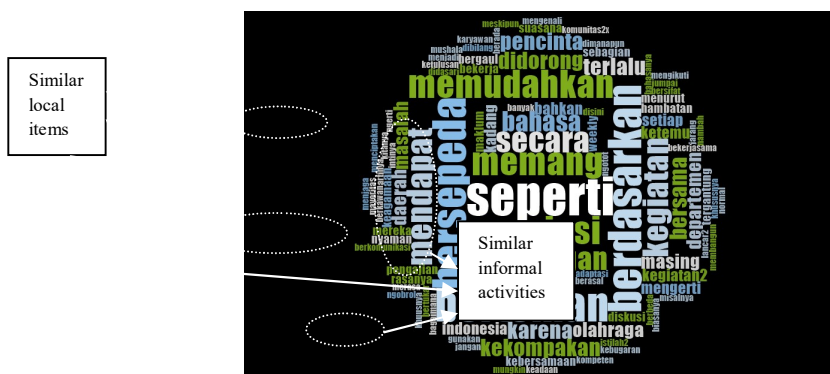
Source: analysis result

From the above discussion, it can be seen that there are 2 (two) important dimensions, namely (1) similar local items and (2) similar informal activities.

6. CONCLUSION

Answering the research questions, it can be concluded that there are 2 (two) important dimensions that must be considered by foreign superior concerning to build workplace relationship with local subordinate, namely (1) similar local items and (2) similar informal activities.

As can be seen in the analysis section above, similar local items are built from the aspect of similarity of origin and language. Obviously, it is impossible to make foreign superiors have similarity of region origin with local subordinate. Therefore, what might be done is from the language factor. It is highly recommended for foreign superior to use the greeting of someone in Indonesian way, even in the local way of Java or Sunda. So, for example, greet someone who was previously done in the Japanese way, like Amir *San*, changed into *Mas* Amir (greeting way of Java) or *Kang* Amir (greeting way of Sunda). Use of some Sundanese terminology, such as '*punten'* (I do apologize) or '*wilujeng enjing'* (good morning) and, things similar to this will make the 'distance' closer and both parties may increasingly be conscious of the differences and respond positively.

As for informal activities, it is strongly recommended that foreign superiors are willing to involve themselves with various informal activities, commonly conducted in Indonesia, such as the people's festivals on Independence Day of the Republic of Indonesia, various games are usually done on the commemoration of Kartini Day (one of the prominent female hero of Indonesia), religious community activities (because the majority of Indonesian people are Moslems), such as breaking the fast, Halal bihalal, and also attending wedding invitations. When attending wedding invitations or similar formal invitations, foreign superiors are advised to be able to shake hands with Sundanese way, that is to shake hands with both hands clipped and then greeted to the intended person.

Through these things, it is expected that the workplace friendship will be well built.

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