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Abstract

Due to tremendous trends in having co-CEO at publicly companies, we tried to uncover the impact of larger power gap to firm performance. Using 10-years of analysis among 34 selected companies, our finding indicated that power gap positively contributed to firm performance. This proved that co-CEO structure succeeded in dealing with shared-power challenges. Wider gaps might results in higher performance. Our finding seems neglected the unity of leadership command while proposing new thoughts that dual power may exhibits stronger spirits to increase the level of productivity in managing groups of company. By having –almost equal – counter party, a leader has the opportunity to perform the best on specific particular task while distributing authority and power to the other partner. Statistically, the model count for 42.12%, higher than the previous research. Therefore we conclude that the co-CEO model work best for emerging markets.

Keywords: Co-CEO, Firm Performance, Shared-Leadership, Emerging Markets

Introduction

Conceptually, working with two respective leaders might cause lots of problems. Conflicting message, loyalty, and possibility of overload tasks were all the potential effects from two bosses that mostly influence company performance (Gallo, 2011). Framework and empirical test shared difference findings. Some concluded that duality of power leaded to lowered performance compare to solitaire leader’s organization (Vieito, 2012; Alvarez & Svejenova, 2005, 2003; Hackman, 2002; Finklestein, 1992; Mintzberg, 1989), while others provided positive contribution (Krause et. al, 2014; Arena et. al, 2011; Pearce & Conger, 2003; O’Toole et. al, 2002).

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Diffused on previous study provide opportunities for further analysis. Though most of them ended with opposite direction but some started the work with the same building blocks namely leadership theory. This study depicts two leadership command theory; unity of command and shared-command.

The first theory stated that the two leaders must compromise and come out with one decision to give clear direction to all members (Finkelstein & D’Aveni, 1994). By addressing this concept, organization relied on effective communication process between CEO and co-CEO. Thus co-CEO ship can be seen as unity of leadership. Ignoring some human aspects of a leader in sharing authority and power might lead to absurdity. This becomes true starting points of the second theory. Shared-command leadership tends to provide rooms for self-appreciation for the two leaders. An easy example would be one leader dealt with domestic markets while the other controlled global performances.

Drawing back from current perspectives, the two theories share the same possibility to achieve better financial performances, but identifying which one works best would be advantageous. We tried to expand the empirical results of Krause (2014) and Arena (2011) using samples from emerging market.

Along with Krause (2014), we develop research model by measuring power gap and its implications on firm performance. Having the two theories at the same position, we proposed the first two hypotheses which test the inverse signs, while developing future research agenda.

Using 34 Indonesian listed companies that identified as implementing the co-CEO ship concept from 2004 to 2014, we found that power gap is positively related to firm performance. The finding clearly highlighted that having two leaders – with proper management mechanism – may lead to better performance. For emerging market, the role of co-CEO was proved as means to enhance good governance quality, since both of them are counter-party in vital decision making. One unique contribution from the study is that consistency in using asset-profit framework degeneration will resulted on better model explanation. Compare to previous works, model used in the study had proved to count more than 26% of firm performances, thus providing direction for future research.

2. Background

Research related leadership to company performance had grown tremendously (Rosen, 1990; Bertrand & Schoar, 2003; Wasserman, 2003; Adams et. al, 2005; Dahya et. al, 2009; Arena et.al, 2011; Krause et. al, 2014). Most of the scholars agree that leadership style contributed impact to organizational performance due to economic environment constraint.
Unfortunately, this interdisciplinary study focuses on analyzing behavior aspects rather than drawing back the connection to financial performance. Arena (2011) found among those who succeeded in starting the discussion for relationship between leadership as product of organizational structure and company financial performance. The study propose useful insight to examine the role of co-CEO from two standpoints; unity of command and shared-command. Referring to Alvarez and Svejenova (2005) the study defined co-CEO as two top executive that performing the same responsibility. Meanwhile further study done by Krause et. al (2014) used stated job title as co-CEO and co-Chairman found on the business directory to search for possible relations to firm performance.

Though using different variable definition, but the main construct is similar. To find relations on performance, the studies used power-gap as product of co-CEOs. The common measure used in previous research was salary-gap between CEO and co-CEOs (Krause et. al, 2014; Bebchuk et. al, 2008), levels of debt (Wasserman et. al, 2001), complexity of firm (O'Toole et.al, 2002; Pearce & Conger, 2003), tenure (Krause et. al, 2014) and level of independency among leaders (Krause et. al, 2014). Without prior debates, not all proxies are available at emerging market. Therefore, this study proposed minor revision for further adaptation purposes.

Our works focused on three research questions. First, we pose relatedness between power-gap and firm’s financial performance. Considering the two proposed theory of command from leadership framework, we examined which postulation works better for emerging market.

The second questions examine the true reasons for having co-CEO. Having considered conclusion from several previous research, without prior judgement to the existence of family relations on organizational structure, this study try to expanded arguments from O'Toole et.al (2002). The needs of co-CEO might be based from complexities pressured. Therefore, we pose our second question to identify possible roles for complexity issues. We analyzed the significance of this variable later in empirical analysis.

The third research question is related to possibility of having curvilinear between co-CEOs and firm performance. This was retrieved from Krause et.al (2014) findings which showed strong evidence of curvilinear relations using developing market data sets. The main reasons for adhering the question is the needs for consistencies when implementing types of command. Curvilinear suggest that at the first stage, company have to pursue one specific type of command up to one point where the existing style would lead to opposite directions.
3. Theory and Hypothesis

3.1 The two command-leadership styles

Best explanations for the importance of command and control are from military fields of study (Builder et al., 1999). Strictly leadership style had profound the vital role of unity of command. Soldiers must be ordered by one command though in some countries the top decision comes from the general council. This type of leadership tends to direct all activity towards the same goals.

The unity of command principle also can be deployed on business field. Relating to Barnard (1968), Simon (1997) and Dalton (2009), unity of command tend to revealed as a single voice of command: one decision for one direction. Simplicity of this type of command has made it feasible for all organizational scale. Today many papers had tried to uncover the true outcome from board’s decision (Shroff et al., 2013; Hermalin & Wesibach, 2003; Shivdasani & Yermack, 1999; Tufano & Sevick, 1997). Some of them succeeded in revealing complex decision process for the co-CEO companionship, but once accurate decision had proven to be the best then influences on further performance might incurred.

Conversely, this style also adhere some potential problem. If co-CEO – for specific reason – disagree with CEO then it may resulted on future dispute or even splitting the company into two different units (Silver & Lublin, 2008). The logic explanation was then named as power-gap. Wider power-gap suggested that command was found on opposite one another while narrower means the two shared equal decision.

The second theory proposed shared-command style. Though the theory still infancy (Carson et al., 2007), but it is still can be conceptualized clearly. Shared-command style of leadership justified as the best revelation of a type of management system that distribute the decision making process on particular portion. Some scholar believed that this system might perform well for highly skilled teamwork, but not for the opposite team.

As O’Toole et al. (2002) argued that for specific environment, the existence of co-CEO is needed to provide balancing power in controlling organization. One unique reflection is through merger and acquisition process. Excluding former CEO from targeted companies would lead to future turbulence since adjustment stage always dominated by psychological human factors. Culture unification between two companies will be easier if accommodation from former boards had been done. On natural-growth business, co-CEO act as counter balance from the absolute power of CEO. Contrary, in solitary structure, CEO has full authority to controlled all resource used (Westphal & Zajac, 1995).
Based on this concept, co-CEO shared of command can be thought as form of decentralization. Upon decentralized organization, power and authority was distributed among respective subordinates (Finklestein, 1992), thus creating more space for the gaps. This shows that narrow power-gap needs higher shared of command, vice versa (Mayo et.al, 2003).

Referring to concepts of innovation, most scholars agree to say that decentralized form of organization needed to fertilize potential ideas (Nakamura, 2003). Centralized organization tends to direct all decision power to the top management and create more cohesion that constraint information sharing mechanism. Therefore, the absence of power gap might turn into negative performance.

Drawing back to previous facts, we proposed the hypothesis as followed:

Hypothesis 1: The power gap is negatively related to firm performance on emerging market
Hypothesis 2: The power gap is positively related to firm performance on emerging market

3.2 Complexity matters

One logically accepted reasons for having co-CEOs structure is due to complexity concerns. As organization developed globally, pressure to manage company in the most effective ways incurred. Though some previous research had succeeded in exploring potential reasons for having co-CEOs, but never been tested empirically (Krause, 2014). O’Toole (2002) proposed that co-CEO can functioned as bridging part between CEO and board members. Using example of shifted firm to multi-national company, the study profound the importance of the intermediary position from the first to the second layer of management.

Moreover, Arena et. al (2011) suggested the role of co-CEOs as means in pursuing better corporate governance. Co-CEO had found effective in creating wide power gap that provide more opportunity to the creation of sustainable competitive advantage. This is proofed by positive response from shareholders at the moment of announcement of the new structure.

However, family reasons might become other possible facts for co-CEO, but recently, no evidence can be drawn easily. Therefore, we propose the third hypothesis as followed:

Hypothesis 3: Organizational complexity is positively related to power-gap that contribute to firm performance
3.3 Possibility for curvilinear relations

Putting sustainability dimension unto shared-command and also unity-of-command, there is some possibility that the relations would be curvilinear. Krause et.al (2014) proved that up to one point, widening power gap tend to lead company to worse situation. One simple consideration is the tenure and age of each leader. Once the company found the best leadership format, they will try to maintain for long term performance, but the risk of changing the structure in one point is meaningful to be neglected. At this point, new comer might share different spirit and paradigm, thus may change the direction.

The same frame of thinking can also be deployed upon the first hypothesis. If power gap is negatively related to firm performance, then as the gap become smaller, the outcome would be higher. Similar concern can be posing on this point. Having considered the difficulties to maintain the comfort environment, therefore it is plausible to examine the curvilinear among them.

Hypothesis 4: The power gap resulted in curvilinear on firm performance in emerging markets

4. Method

4.1 Sample and data collection

This study compiles all Indonesian listed company that has co-CEO or co-Chairman at some point between 2004 and 2014. We use Indonesia Stock Exchange namely IDX data to find the potential sample. From the first filtering process, there are 79 candidates. We then use the second criteria to have another filtering process. The checking of data accuracy and availability of information needed sphere us 42 companies. Lastly, matching between financial data needed and available report was done. At this stage, 8 companies found to have missing data, thus leaving 34 for further analysis.

4.2 Variable measurements

The dependent variable in this study is firm performance. Arena et.al (2011) defined performance as proxies by Return on Asset, Return on Equity and Market to Book Ratio. Meanwhile Krause et.al (2014) proposed the use of Return on Equity t+1 as best reflection for collective decision making through the existence of co-CEOs. Considering that based on publicly data, most Indonesian listed companies change its structure at the first quarter therefore deploying ROE t+1 will cause misleading. This study used ROE as measured by earning after tax divided by total book value of equity.
The independent variable for duality is power-gap. Canella and Shen’s (2001) used composite index to measure power-gap, consisted of co-CEO salary, tenure, stock ownership and indicator variable reflecting double positioned between co-CEO and co-Chairman or even the Chairman. This method was further used by Krause (2014) and works well using developing market data.

Calculating the composite index become major obstacle in this study since co-CEOs salary is categorized as unpublished data. Therefore, we use measurement proposed by Arena et.al (2011) through some minor modification. Putting previous conclusion in the model suggested the use of excess of free cash flow as best representation of power gap. The excess was calculated as free cash flow divided by total asset along testing periods. Meanwhile, free cash flow was calculated using discounted cash flow model by accommodating depreciation, capital expenditure, and changes in net working capital.

The second independent variable was firm complexity. O’Toole et.al (2002) explained that complexity might indicate by size or even level of debt. Krause et.al (2014) used number of employees and led to inaccuracy, while Arena et.al (2002) used natural logarithm of total asset as best representing organizational complexity. This study used total asset as firm size.

Referring to Krause et.al (2014), this study included number of controlled variable consisted of debt equity ratio, board independence, acquisition as dummy variable and debt to asset ratio. Debt to equity ratio used to represent Arena et.al (2011) finding that co-CEO lead to higher used of total debt. Board independence was used to examine potential objectivity of decision made by the board. Meanwhile, acquisition used on dummy format to give another reasons for having co-CEOs format. Lastly, tenure used to identify the period that possible power gap might happened.

5. Analysis and Results

This study tested the hypothesis using pooled ordinary least square. Descriptive statistics and pair wise correlations among variables can be seen on table 1. Meanwhile, regression results can be seen on table 2 and 3. From ANOVA parts, we can see that the model reached its significance (F=38.73, p < 0.05, R2 = 48.30%) therefore our proposed research model can explained 48.30%% of the co-CEOs phenomenon on its relations with firm performance, while 74% explained by other variables which excluded from the study.
Table 1: Descriptive statistic and pair wise correlation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. ROE</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>340</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Power gap</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>340</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Size</td>
<td>26.99</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. DER</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>23.50</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Board Independence</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>-0.18</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Acquisition</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>-0.16</td>
<td>-0.12</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. DAR</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>-0.33</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Tenure</td>
<td>4.86</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>-0.12</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>-0.16</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All correlations with absolute values greater than 0.2 are significant at the p < 0.001 level.

Furthermore, from table 3 we can see that power gap as proxies by excess gap has positive significance to firm performance (t=12.25, p < 0.05). This implied that the study succeeded in providing strong evidence on hypothesis 2 and no evidence for hypothesis 1. The power gap is found positively related to firm performance. Wider power gap relates to better firm performance.

This study failed to find evidence on complexity as driver for having co-CEOs to achieve higher performance. Though the positive sign was found, but there is no proper statistical evidence. The same facts happened for debt to equity ratio, board independence, and tenure. Therefore, we failed to accept hypothesis 3. Controlled variable that succeeded proved in the study is acquisition and debt to asset ratio. Acquisition is negatively related in accordance with power gap unto firm performance. Though higher acquisition means lower firm performance, but this implied that the co-CEOs structure had shared for merger-acquisition reasons. This is complementary to the complexity variable among power-gap phenomenon.

Debt to asset ratio is found negatively significance to co-CEOs firm performance. This implied that upon co-CEOs company, the use of debt tend to lower firm performance. Having this result, we might neglect common opinion stated that co-CEOs companies found to have more debt compare to solitary structure company.
Table 2: Regression Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>-.032</td>
<td>-.289</td>
<td>.773</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PG2</td>
<td>-.183</td>
<td>-.070</td>
<td>1.746</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Power gap</td>
<td>.544</td>
<td>.527</td>
<td>12.249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Size</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>.039</td>
<td>.973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DER</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>-.052</td>
<td>-1.299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BI</td>
<td>.011</td>
<td>.043</td>
<td>1.057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acquisition</td>
<td>-.036</td>
<td>-.123</td>
<td>2.961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TDAR</td>
<td>-.057</td>
<td>-.278</td>
<td>6.582</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tenure</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.034</td>
<td>.836</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Dependent Variable: ROE

The result of hypothesis testing number 4 can be seen on table 3. This study succeeded to proof the curvilinear relations to firm performance (p < 0.05, R² = 0.186). Therefore, we supported hypothesis number 4. Up to one point, wider power gap tend to decrease company performance.

6. Discussion

This study provide no evidence on what Fayol (1949) said about leading a company: two heads for the same body is just like a monster. Along with Arena et.al (2011) and Krause et.al (2014) we found that co-CEO organizational structure contribute more than 25% of firm performance, even for the emerging market. We found that power gap play an important role in giving opportunity for the company to build supporting preservation atmosphere for creativity and innovation. When wider gap defined as room for more decentralization, the ease of power from top management may enhance the productivity of communication flow within organization. This will ensure the quality of learning and adaptation phase on the context of sustainable innovation (Tran & Tian, 2013; Lam, 2010; Bartel, 2009; whitely, 2003).
Table 3: Model Summary and Parameter Estimates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equation</th>
<th>Model Summary</th>
<th>Parameter Estimates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R Square</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear</td>
<td>.008</td>
<td>2.791</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quadratic</td>
<td>.186</td>
<td>38.525</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The independent variable is PG2.

From knowledge management perspective, wider power gap eliminates the absolute inducement of paradigm from one leader. Many scholar had revealed that the power of single CEO have strong impact to firm performance (Adams, 2005). Solitaire leader might create possibility to dominate the organization with his or her internal paradigm. This is the major obstacle for an effective knowledge management system.

Referring to Prasetyo et. al (2016), using third sector of economy on emerging market as unit of analysis, productive knowledge management is strongly supported by decentralized span of command. In contrast, unity of command had recognized as mechanism of dichotomization creativity thus limits creation of new knowledge. Moreover, the role of leader on the production of un-imitable knowledge is very crucial. This finding relate to the needs to have co-CEOs ship.

Failure to show the evidence of complexity matters on co-CEOs ship structure indicated that the reason is still absurd. Size of the company is positively contribute to co-CEO firm performance, but not statistically significant. Therefore we failed to support O'Toole et. al (2011) which indicated complexity as proxies of duality leaders. The third contribution of this study is the evidence of merger and acquisition as one potential reason to have co-CEOs structure. The finding gave strong support to Silver and Lublin (2008), Krause et.al (2014). Our sample is dominated by companies which is actively growth in an-organically ways. Most of the co-CEO found to be the former CEO on pre-merger eras. This is logically accepted than the family relatedness reason.

For most emerging market, corporate governance has become dominant issue for the last fifteen years (Claessens & Yortoglu, 2012). Stakeholder is more appreciable to company that is proven to manage the business professionally.
Drawing back from the facts that merger and acquisition decision lies on the basis consideration that company might lost its identity, therefore acknowledging former leader to new organizational structure is needed. Psychologically, member of the organization will feel that the current leader still has power to protect their existence in the new structure (Goyal, 2013; Shok & Roth, 2011; Zolo, 2004).

Along with Arena, et.al (2011), there is indication that using asset utilization ratio (debt to asset ratio) may be best representing co-CEO ship phenomenon. Our finding suggested the use of DAR as indication of urgent needs to have second leader. This is feasible since having more liabilities as source of financing had triggered new responsibility. The top leader must be able to provide guarantee that they will manage the funds on the right strategy, since failure in utilizing asset on its maximum capacity will negatively impacted the image of the company. Therefore, it might be future potential measure for firm complexity.

Another unique contribution of the study is the finding of curvilinear relations between power gap and firm performance. Supporting Krause et.al (2014), we found that there should be tactical ways to maintain power gap at the best performance. One major difference between previous study and our finding is that the absence of power gap still resulted on positive performance, while the former conclude negative performance.

Maintaining the best performance of power gap required proportion mixture between unity of command type and shared-command. This must be strong supported by proper governance and control mechanism. Once internal dispute between the two top leaders had found, the best solution would be the changing on management structure.

Our last independent variable – tenure – is positively related to co-CEO firm performance. This might implied that the organization has the opportunity to widen the power gap by maintaining the existing structure up to one point where it has to be stopped. Otherwise, internal dispute on duality context will attribute to a lower image and thus hurting its financial performance.

The study gave strong support to Huang (2013) which concluded the curvilinear shape on the relations between director tenure and firm performance. From our statistical perspective, the coefficient of tenure is very small. It implied that the contribution of tenure to co-CEO firm performance is somewhat small. Organization needs to manage the tenure properly to identify the appropriate time to change from shared-command to unity of command before repeating the cycle.
7. Conclusion

This study had answered the three questions systematically. Using emerging market as examples, Co-CEOs had proven as positively related to firm performance mostly because they must deal with complex problem concerning asset utilization. Most of the co-CEO incurred from merger and acquisition process. This implied that the structure was created to acknowledge former leader as to ease cultural synchronization on post-merger. Due to curvilinear relations, the organization should pay more attention to the existing power gap. Once the internal dispute between the two leaders identified, then shifting to unity of command style would safe its mid-term financial performance.

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