

Researcher helps to unlock the value of Chinese Indonesians

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(Phys.org) -- Managers working in Chinese Indonesian firms are more assertive and competitive, traits which may account for why their companies outperform those run by managers in Javanese Indonesian companies, a Deakin University PhD candidate has found.

Mirwan Perdhana's findings from his thesis which is being done through the School of Management and Marketing compared the cultural values and leadership styles of managers in Chinese Indonesian firms with those of managers in Javanese Indonesian firms.

The results may also go some way to explaining why despite being the minority group in Indonesia, Chinese Indonesian people dominated the list of 10 wealthiest Indonesians.

Mirwan was among 10 PhD candidates vying to be the University's entrant in the national Three Minute Thesis Competition where students present a compelling oration on their thesis topic and its significance in language appropriate to a non-specialist audience.

Mirwan's study is unique because it compares the different cultural styles that can exist within a country rather than comparing the styles between two different countries.

"Indonesia has 120 different cultural groups, and each one has its own language," Mirwan said.

“We have a national language which is used to communicate between the different ethnic groups, but within the country significant differences between cultural groups exist.”

Mirwan said there was a tendency to generalise about Indonesian society ignoring this multicultural complexity. His research hopes to redress this imbalance

As part of his study Mirwan interviewed 200 managers working in Javanese and Chinese Indonesian companies.

“So far we have found that Chinese Indonesian managers have higher acceptance toward the inequality in power distribution and higher sense of collectivism,” he said.

“They also rate the values of competitiveness, assertiveness and ambition more highly, whereas [managers](#) in Javanese companies consider these aspects of moderate importance.”

Mirwan, who works as a lecturer in Indonesia, said these outcomes can be used to develop a new Indonesian-based curriculum.

“Most universities and business schools in Indonesia are greatly influenced by the United States values, which may cause “split personalities” and the distortion of local values,” he said.

Provided by Deakin University

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