

PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt / Egyptology

DIFFERENCES IN ETHNICITY: OWNERS POWER AND STRATEGY SELECTION ON THE HOTEL INDUSTRY IN SUMATERA INDONESIA

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Antonius Singgih Setiawan, Agustinus Widyartono. Differences In Ethnicity: Owners Power And Strategy Selection On The Hotel Industry In Sumatera Indonesia-- Palarch's Journal Of Archaeology Of Egypt/Egyptology 17(4), 1009-1021. ISSN 1567-214x

Keywords: Owners Ethnicity; Owners Power; Strategy Selection

ABSTRACT

This study aims to prove differences in the level of owner's power and strategy selection based on ethnicity categories of hotel owners. The study is conducted with quantitative methods using primary data through a survey of hotel general managers/leaders in the Sumatera region. A total of 395 questionnaires are distributed to the hotel general managers/leaders. The number of questionnaires used in this study is 224. Nonparametric Wilcoxon rank sum test for two independent samples analysis is used to test research hypotheses. The results of the study indicate that there are differences in the level of owner's power and strategy selection based on differences in ethnicity of the hotel owners.

INTRODUCTION

The difference in the system of ethnicity culture in one place can have an impact on the different systems and business strategies applied by an entrepreneur. That is because, culture in the context of local culture and national culture will affect the organization (Magundjaya, 2013). An important challenge for global business is the ability of businesses to identify differences in cultural thinking when developing and building company strategies because this will provide insight for managers to create competitive advantage (Slater *et al.*, 2007). Some of these explanations illustrate that the values of ethnic culture held by the entrepreneur can influence the style of their business.

Koning (2007) illustrates an example of how differences in ethnicity in the context of cultural values can have an impact on one's business behavior in Indonesia. This

example is based on differences in the principal characteristics of the private networks of *Pribumi* ethnic groups and Chinese ethnic groups. The Chinese ethnic private network is stronger than the private network of *Pribumi* ethnicities. This personal network is not only the basis of access to capital and goods, however, but the use of this network is also seen as identical with trust and is inherently different from the way of doing business between ethnic *Pribumi* and Chinese. Brett (2017) explains that culture can be seen as a characteristic of values, norms, and characteristics of people in a country as well as political, economic and legal systems that provide the structure of social interaction in that place. The customs and culture of an ethnic group that has an impact on the socio-economic life of the community will very likely affect business governance in that place.

Therefore, the values of ethnicity culture held by an entrepreneur can also be a problem that might have an impact on the pattern of managing a business. This is as explained by Kania (2010) that cultural differences are important fundamental factors that must be considered in carrying out a business. Therefore, behavior habits and values of ethnicity culture also seem to be an important factor in seeing the pattern of business management in a place. The problem is that scientific publications on differences in the characteristics of ethnicity in business management are still rarely found, especially for research conducted in the Sumatra region. As we know, the *Pribumi* ethnic groups who are dominant in business activities in the Sumatra region are Malay and Minang ethnic. Some studies on the characteristics of ethnicity in the context of business behavior by Musianto (2007); Koning (2007); Pontjoharyo (2011) is studied in the Java region. The *Pribumi* ethnic groups dominant in the study area were Javanese.

Based on this, the objective to be achieved from this study is to identify whether the different ethnicity characteristics of hotel owners make a difference in the management of hotel businesses in the Sumatra region. This is based on a phenomenon that shows that the difference in ethnicity of business owners is possible to bring effect to the differences in the cultural values of entrepreneurs that will be carried away in the process of managing the business. This is in accordance with the findings of Koning (2007) which explains that differences in ethnicity in the context of cultural values can have an impact on one's business behavior.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Ethnicity

Culture contains the overall achievements of society that are passed down from generation to generation in connection with beliefs, behavioral models and consequences rules (Kania, 2010). Cultural values are often identified using the five main dimensions of Hofstede's culture (2011), namely power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individuality – collectivity, masculinity – femininity, long term – short term orientation. Mangundjaya (2013) sees Indonesian people's cultural values characterized as a society that has a high value of collectivity, places high

importance on seniority, prefers stable situations and conditions has clear boundaries between gender roles and has a time orientation which is more short-term. This is different from the ethnic Chinese as one of the ethnic migrants in Indonesia.

Chinese ethnicity has become an important part of creating multi-cultural values in Indonesia. Chinese ethnic cultural values are often known as Confucian values. These values include the emphasis on obligations rather than rights, emphasis on virtue and honesty rather than law, emphasis on education, strong relationships between past and present, the material under community value, high appreciation of logic and human ratios and fulfillment of balance in contrasting things (Musianto, 2007).

Pontjoharyo's study (2011) found the implications of the accounting character of overseas Chinese in the Chinese business model related to the dimensions of managerial ideology. The results of this study confirm that the managerial ideological dimensions of patrimonialism have a significant effect on determining corporate objectives and leadership succession decisions. Apart from that, Chinese business people prefer to implement empowerment of participatory roles and responsibilities of superiors and employees in managerial activities.

Owners Power

Hotel owners and operators are always in an enduring organizational relationship, so the intra-organization power literature develops power locus measures between hotel owners and hotel operators (Turner and Guilding, 2013). Chen and Tan (2013) explained that ownership plays a role in the control and power of the company it owns. owners power are considered an important factor in managing the hotel industry. This has an impact on the extent to which hotel top management has the ability to implement managerial policies (Park and Kim, 2014). Owner power becomes dominant enough to intervene with hotel operator/management when competence and experience of the operator/management are a concern (Setiawan *et al.*, 2019).

It should be understood, in the hotel industry, there are three different key players, namely franchisors/operators/affiliates, management, and hotel owners (Xiao *et al.*, 2012). Hodari *et al.*, (2017) explain that the autonomy and independence of the general manager can be formed when hotel owners and operators have aligned goals in determining the hotel business objectives. This can be interpreted that, if the power of the owner is more dominant in determining the hotel management strategy, the general manager will experience a pressure situation and become not independent in carrying out the business operations policy.

Strategy Selection

The strategy is often seen as a means for companies to achieve and maintain a competitive advantage over other companies (Porter, 1980; 1985). One of the main

objectives of business managers is to achieve superior performance (Tavitiyaman *et al.*, 2012). Chathoth and Olsen (2007) state that previous research has shown that the formulation and implementation of strategies is a key factor in achieving these goals. Cinquini and Tenucci (2010) summarize the strategy variables which are the basis of a consistent section in the empirical research of management control systems, namely the strategy prospector and defender.

However, the competitive strategy of Porter's Model (1980, 1985) is considered to have popularity, the structure is well defined, has clarity, simplicity and general nature, and this approach complements two other approaches to analysis at the aggregate level (Ormanidhi and Stringa, 2008). The two main typologies of Porter's model (1980, 1985) are cost leadership strategies and differentiation (Teeratansirikool *et al.*, 2013).

HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Differences of owners power based on the ethnicity of hotel owners

In the context of business management, Kotey and Meredith (1997) and Kadir (2014) found the results of research which stated that the values of the personality of the company owner could influence the orientation of the company's business strategy. This condition is relevant to the findings of Ayoun and Moreo (2008) which indicate that there are differences in power distance in the cultural context of participatory approaches in the process of developing hotel industry strategies. Furthermore, Park and Kim (2014) explain that owner power is an important factor that has an impact on the extent to which hotel top management has the ability to implement managerial policies.

Another finding, Bhaskaran and Sukmaran (2007) concluded that there are differences between business entities in regulating and running business operations based on national cultural differences owned by company owners and managers. Pontjoharyo (2011) explains that Chinese business people prefer to implement participatory empowerment and responsibility in managerial activities. On the other hand, Zolkiewski and Feng (2012) concluded that the relationship model of business management portfolio in Chinese ethnic culture was a useful tool for management. Different things, *Pribumi* ethnic places more importance on seniority (Mangundjaya, 2013). For this reason, the hypothesis that will be proven in this study are:

H1: There are differences in the level of power of hotel owners based on the ethnicity category of hotel owners.

Differences in strategy selection based on the ethnicity of hotel owners

Cinquini and Tenucci (2010) explain that prospective competitive strategies are carried out through product innovation, offer a wider range of products and are

considered as pioneers in a certain product and market fields. This shows that prospective competitive strategies are more long-term oriented and anticipate competition. In contrast to prospective strategies, defender strategies operate in a relatively stable environment and offer a narrow range of products. Companies with this kind of strategy focus on efficiency. On the other hand, Slater *et al.* (2007) explain that the important challenge of global business is the ability to identify differences in cultural thinking when developing and developing corporate strategies. Koning (2007) explains that differences in ethnicity in the context of cultural values can make an impact on one's business behavior. This will ultimately also relate to determining business strategy.

Koning (2007) explains the differences in principles between ethnic Chinese and *Pribumi* ethnicities in allocating business profits. The Chinese, if they get the benefits, will save and use it to reinvest. Conversely, *Pribumi* people if they get profits are often used to shop things outside of the business. This had an impact on the speed of Chinese people in responding to new business opportunities than *Pribumi* people. Furthermore, Musianto (2007) explained that Chinese ethnic groups prioritize the principles of frugality, creativity, and innovation that characterize long-term orientation. In contrast, *Pribumi* ethnic tends to prefer stable situations and conditions with more short-term orientation (Mangundjaya, 2013). Finally, Blackburn *et al.* (2013) explained that the characteristics of business owners can be attached to the strategies and business plans implemented. For this reason, the hypothesis that will be proven in this study are:

H2: There are differences in the business strategies selection based on the ethnicity category of hotel owners.

Method

Sample

The sampling frame of the research is obtained from the data containing the total number of star-rated hotels in Sumatera in 2016, amounting 505 hotels, recorded by Statistics Indonesia. However, Statistics Indonesia does not provide complete information about the names and addresses of the hotels surveyed for this research. Hence, such information was collected from hotel booking websites such as traveloka.com and pegipegi.com. Based on the searching, 395 star-rated hotels were found. Table 1 below displays the distribution of the research questionnaire.

Table 1
Questionnaire Distribution

Description	Number of questionnaire
Number of a questionnaire distributed to the respondents	395
Number of respondents refusing to participate	(168)
Number of questionnaires returned incomplete	(3)
Number of questionnaires returned and analyzed	224
Response rate	56.71%

Variables

Owners power is observed from the locus power, which is the comparison of owner power and operator or general manager power in influencing the policy of hotel operation. Owners power is represented based on coercive power, defined as the power exercised by owners to administer punishment to control the organization (Zhao *et al.*, 2008; Lu and Hao, 2013). The measurement of coercive power is adopted from the instrument developed by Turner and Guilding (2013). Respondents were asked to demonstrate their level of the agreement through a 6-level Likert scale, with 1 for strongly disagree and 6 for strongly agree.

The strategy selection is based on a pattern of strategies, namely prospective and defender (Miles and Snow, 1978). Strategy selection is measured using instruments used by Cinquini and Tenucci (2010). Strategy selection is measured by modifying the instruments Cinquini and Tenucci (2010) which were previously developed by Shortell and Zajac (1990) by asking respondents to show a level of agreement with 6 Likert scales, 1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree.

Ethnicity is defined following the definition of Koning (2007) as a collective identity which can be the initial and important dimension of self-identification. The owner's ethnicity in this study was grouped into two categories, namely (1) *Pribumi* and (2) Chinese. The grouping of ethnicities in these two categories is based on Koning's (2007) argument that Chinese ethnic networks are stronger than the private networks of *Pribumi* ethnic groups.

RESULTS

Statistic Descriptive

This study identifies the ethnicity of hotel owners in the Sumatera region. Table 2 shows that the majority of hotel owners operating in the Sumatera island region are ethnic Chinese as many as 123 people (54.9%). Hotel owners who are ethnic *Pribumi* are as many as 101 people (45.1%). This data shows that hotel business activities running in Indonesia, especially on the island of Sumatera, are mostly

carried out by ethnic Chinese. This data also reinforces the fact that ethnic Chinese have more entrepreneurial characteristics compared to *Pribumi* in Indonesia.

Table 2
Research Data

Variable	Number	(%)		
1. Owner Ethnicity				
a. <i>Pribumi</i>	101	45,1		
b. Chiness	123	54,9		
	Theoretical range	Actual range	Mean	SD
2. Owners Power	3 – 18	3 – 18	12,13	5,09
3. Strategy Selection	4 – 24	4 – 24	18,44	4,54

Based on **Table 2** also can be seen the power data of the owner of the hotel industry on the Sumatra island. Owners power data is used to identify whether the owner of a hotel company in the Sumatra island region has a more dominant power than hotel management. This needs to be identified because in business management there is a known difference in interests between owners and management or often referred to as agency conflict. Data power of hotel owners in Sumatra island is seen based on the theoretical range 3 – 18 in the actual range 3 – 18. The level of the average value of owner power is at 12.13. This indicates that the average, in fact, hotel owners in the island of Sumatra tend not to have power domination at full strength in influencing hotel management by management.

Based on **Table 2** also can be seen data on strategy selection in the hotel industry in the Sumatra island region. The strategy selection data is used to identify whether hotel companies in Sumatra island tend to choose a defender strategy or tend to choose a prospector strategy. Data on the choice of hotel management strategies in the island of Sumatra are seen based on the theoretical range of 4 – 24 in the actual range 4 – 24. The average value of strategy selection is at 18.44. the average hotel industry manager on the island of Sumatra tends to choose a prospector strategy.

Table 3
Data Validity and Reliability

Variable	Validity	Cronbach Alpha
Owners Power		
OP 1	0.955**	0.980
OP 2	0.966**	
OP 3	0.950**	
Strategy Selection		
SS 1	0.914**	0.965
SS 2	0.919**	
SS 3	0.917**	
SS 4	0.901**	

** Corrected item-total correlation significant at 0.05

Table 3 shows the results of testing the validity of research data. Validity test is based on the value of corrected item-total correlation (value of r statistics). Based on the number of samples 224, all indicators of owner power and strategi choices variables are declared valid. It is proved that all of the corrected item-total correlation (value of r statistics) significant at 0.05. Table 3 also shows the results of the reliability testing of research data. Data reliability is based on the Cronbach alpha value of each data of the research variables. The results of the Cronbach alpha test show that owners power and strategy selection variables have Cronbach alpha above the required critical value (0.8). Therefore, it can be concluded that the data of variables show reliable results, so the data feasible to be used for the further research process.

Normality Assumption

Table 4
Normality Test

Variable	K-S Z	Asymp. Sig
Owners Power	2.799	0.000***
Strategy Selection	2.746	0.000***

***Significant at 0.01

Based on **Table 4** can be seen that the results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z normality test for each study variable data have the value of Asymp. Sig K-S Z <0.05. This means that each research variable data does not meet the assumption of a normal distribution. Therefore, to prove the differences in owner's power and strategy selection based on the ethnicity categories of the owners, the Mann-Whitney nonparametric tests were conducted.

Mann-Whitney Test

Table 5
Mann-Whitney Test of Owners Ethnicity

Variable	Mean Rank		Asymp. Sig (2-tailed)
	Chiness (n=123)	Pribumi (n=101)	
Owners Power	89.46	140.56	0.000***
Strategy Selection	124.15	98.31	0.003***

*** significant at 0.01

Table 5 shows the mean rank value of the power levels of hotel owners in Chinese and *Pribumi* ethnic groups is differ. The mean rank power of the *Pribumi* people is greater than the mean rank power of Chinese ethnic hotel owners. The mean rank power of the owner is of *Pribumi* ethnic at 140.56 while the mean rank power of

Chinese ethnic hotel owners is at 89.46 at a significant difference of 0,000 or at α 1%. This finding shows that the average Chinese ethnic hotel owner actually has a lower power level than the *Pribumi* hotel owner. Based on these findings, the research hypothesis which states that there are differences in the level of power of owners based on ethnicity categories of hotel owners can be supported.

Table 5 also shows that the mean rank strategy selection in Chinese-owned hotels is greater than *Pribumi*. The mean rank strategy selection in Chinese-owned hotels is 124.15 while the mean rank of *Pribumi* is 98.31 with a significant difference of 0.003 at α 1%. This finding shows that hotels owned by Chinese ethnic entrepreneurs on average have a better strategy selection than by *Pribumi* entrepreneurs. Based on these findings, the research hypothesis which states that there are differences in the strategy selection based on ethnicity categories of hotel owners can be supported.

DISCUSSION

Differences of owners power based on the ethnicity of hotel owners

Brett (2017) reveals that culture provides functional solutions to social interaction problems. Ayoun and Moreo (2008) indicate that there are differences in power distance in the cultural context of participatory approaches in the process of developing hotel industry strategies. Park and Kim (2014) explain that owner power is an important factor that has an impact on the extent to which hotel top management has the ability to implement managerial policies. Kania (2010) states that cultural differences are important fundamental factors that must be considered in carrying out a business.

In connection with differences in cultural values, Pontjoharyo (2011) explains that Chinese business people prefer to implement participatory empowerment roles and responsibilities in managerial activities. These values have an impact on the distribution and delegation of power from the owner to manage. This is also supported by the principle of mutual trust and a high commitment to maintaining every trust that has been given. On the other hand, *Pribumi* ethnic groups prioritize the aspect of seniority (Mangundjaya, 2013) which has an impact on the pattern of power that is rigid and centered on certain figures, in this case, is the business owner.

The empirical findings of this study confirm some of these explanations. The final findings of this study indicate an empirical fact that the level of power of *Pribumi* hotel owners is stronger than the power of Chinese ethnic hotel owners. The empirical facts of *Pribumi* owners' power are higher than the power of Chinese owners, confirming that *Pribumi* ethnic have a tendency to prioritize seniority (Mangundjaya, 2013). The principle of ethnic seniority of *Pribumi* people shows that the dominant attitude to be prioritized and valued tends to be an obstacle for them to be willing to share authority with subordinates or other parties who are

under their authority. On the other hand, the empirical facts that show the power of Chinese owners are lower than the power of *Pribumi* owners confirm that Chinese ethnic groups prioritize participatory principles, responsibility and prioritize trust (Pontjoharyo, 2011) suggests that ethnic Chinese entrepreneurs are more willing to delegate power and authority to subordinates or other parties under their authority.

The results of this study also indicate that hotel owners who prioritize participatory principles are owners who seek to further divide/delegate power or authority to other parties underneath so that those who get a delegation of authority will create more role participation. On the other hand, owners who prioritize the principle of seniority will tend to maintain the power to dominate decisions based on personal thinking will eliminate role participation. Finally, related to the relationship between owners and business managers, business owners who have ethnicity cultural values by prioritizing participatory principles will show different power characteristics compared to business owners prioritizing seniority values.

Differences in strategy selection based on the ethnicity of hotel owners

Cinquini and Tenucci (2010) explain that strategy can be seen in two main characteristics, namely, prospector and defender strategy. On the other hand, Koning (2007) explains that ethnic differences in the context of cultural values can have an impact on one's business behavior. Furthermore, the characteristics of business owners can be based on applied business strategies and plans (Blackburn *et al.* (2013).

Obviously, Koning (2007) shows differences in principles between Chinese ethnic and *Pribumi* ethnic in terms of business strategies related to the allocation of business profits. The Chinese, if they get the benefits, will save and use it to reinvest. Conversely, *Pribumi* people if they get profits are often used to shop things outside of the business. These two characteristics indicate that Chinese ethnic think more long-term, whereas *Pribumi* is more short-term oriented. This is relevant to Musianto (2007) who explained that Chinese ethnic groups prioritize the principles of frugality, creativity, and innovation that characterize long-term orientation. In contrast, *Pribumi* ethnic tends to prefer stable situations and conditions with more short-term orientation (Mangundjaya, 2013).

The empirical findings from this study confirm some of these explanations. *Pribumi* ethnic values that are generally more oriented to the short term are confirmed from empirical facts that show the value of strategy selection in hotels owned by *Pribumi* ethnic is lower than those owned by Chinese. This indicates that *Pribumi* ethnic cultural values-oriented to short-term stable situations (Mangundjaya, 2013) will tend to feel satisfied and not try to change and develop so that *Pribumi* ethnic groups will tend to choose a defender-oriented strategy. On the other hand, the characteristics of the Chinese ethnic who prioritize creative and innovative values (Musianto, 2007) direct the company to choose a more competitive strategy, in this case, the prospector's strategy.

Finally, the empirical findings of the study indicate that the choice of strategies for hotels owned by *Pribumi* people lower than those owned by Chinese ethnic also confirms that the principle of Chinese discipline saves profits to ensure the adequacy of new investment capital (Koning, 2007). This shows that the ethnic Chinese think more long-term and anticipate competition. Conversely, undisciplined *Pribumi* people save profits, it will be difficult to respond to opportunities because they are more thoughtful in meeting short-term needs.

CONCLUSION

This study concluded that there were differences in owners power and strategy selection based on the ethnicity category of hotel owners. The results showed that Chinese-owned hotels were superior in terms of business strategy selection. On the contrary, the owner of a *Pribumi* ethnic hotel actually shows that the owner has a more dominant power to intervene in management in managing hotel operations.

The findings of this study indicate and confirm that there are differences in the characteristics of the two ethnic groups related to the implementation of business practices. Therefore, the implications of this study indicate the opportunity to develop a research model to look at ethnicity characteristics related to the implementation of business practices in the effort to achieve company performance. The results of the study also show the positive values possessed by Chinese ethnicity that can be practiced and run business activities. Therefore, another positive implication is that every entrepreneur can adopt these cultural values in carrying out their business activities.

This research certainly still has a limitation that hope can be improved and refined in future research. The limitations of the results of this study are that they have not seen the impact of the relationship between owner ethnicity, owners power and strategy selection for achieving company performance. For this reason, future research can consider looking at performance achievements as a result of the relationship.

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