My mom is a hero: A clock wise analysis of women's role in poverty alleviation through an indigenous community entrepreneurship program

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Abstract

The study tries to observe the women’s role in community development on indigenous society. Using Indonesia’s perspective, the study deploys nine tribes to provide explanations on two folds questions: how indigenous society sees women’s role in community entrepreneurship and what are the antecedents for this noble idea. In order to maintain the objectivity of the findings, the study uses a clock wise perspective among four actors. The first is analyzing the real actress. One round focus group discussion among experts and two rounds of Delphi technique had been performed. Second is by observing the opinion from their husband’s side. This is done to test the gender equality matters. The third actor is their kids. The study also observes how the children see their mommy as the main actress in the society. Series of in-depth interview are performs to draws some opinions. The fourth actor is relating to the stakeholder. As conclusions, the study witnesses how indigenous women are taught to be heirs of Heaven since their childhood. This is the greatest motivation for them to serves the society. A strong religious background had revived them to bear the responsibility in developing their civilization. Once they faced the real poverty issues, then community entrepreneurship would be the most feasible way-out. Our observations had justified how they inspires the community to (1) portray the dreams, (2) work together to achieve the dreams and (3) duplicate the model to inspire others. We witness a multi-facet of social learning theory, socio-cultural theory, social network theory, self-motivation, individual aspect, demographic and externalities had played an important role in preserving their motivations to be a hero. Moreover, they also constantly improve their quality with strong knowledge in order to achieve better performance for the common good of the society. As compares to men, indigenous women are found to have better resilience in dealing with critical social issues. Thus, it is clearly portrayed that my mom is the real hero.

Keywords: women, community entrepreneurship, performance, indigenous society

1. Introduction
The role of women in economy has been widely explored for the past three decades. Analysis in developing nations worldwide concludes that the growth of microenterprise is dominated by women. In Bangladesh as well as in India and Pakistan, massive development of small-medium enterprises in several villages were initiated and managed by mid-age housewife. To deal with social problems such as domestic violence, gender-political issues and poverty, women were trained to amplify their ability to be more autonomy in terms of economy. Similar condition also happened in some African countries. Cultural-beliefs dimension had posed strong influence to the society. As the second citizens, some women even found to be more reluctant to break away from current social shackles. At this point, scholar seems unable to detach from the prevailing norms that build the entire paradigm (Pepper 2012, 142).

Critics of the current findings argued that for most cases, failure in women empowerment program was caused by strong patriarchal social structure in today’s civilization. Therefore current paradigm shift has become absolute. One possible way is by linking gender subordination with the root of the culture experienced by the community (Metcalf 2011, 140; Moodie 2008, 458; Makinde 2004, 168; Wray 2003, 518; Kabeer 2001, 78; Appelbaum et al. 1999, 249).

To date researches that sought to identify the clear links among the two are still inclusive (Ibrahim and Alkire 2007, 391). In Indonesia, most study focused on promoting new agenda for policy maker while leaving the roots of the problem behind1. Current study is trying to couple the gap by positioning indigenous tribes as unit of analysis. Using nine-selected tribes, the study aimed to explore how cultural beliefs may provide enough rooms for women to play an important role in terms of family and community economy. Focus group discussion and two-rounds of Delphi technique were done to retrieve any valuable insight for further study. Then in addition, aiming to provide objective insight to the study, we deployed a clock-wise perspective among four actors and actress: the women as key point, their closed family – including parents and children, their spouse and the neighboring society. Series of in-depth interview among 56 informants were performed during period of six months (April 2016 – September 2016) to draw some opinions for further justification. And finally, we develop women empowerment model for further studies.

Current study begins with understanding the hidden knowledge lies within indigenous society. A comprehensive literature reviews that focus on indigenous society were done to portray a clear insight to the issues. Linkage between ancestor’s belief, faith-based value, modernization and economic paradigm were carefully examined in order to develop framework for the study. We provide clear argument for the matters in section two. Upon the next stage, the stated framework was then tested using current study’s unit of analysis. We purposively appointed indigenous women from Java, Sunda, Dayak, Minangkabau, Moluccas, Balinese, Betawi, Madurese and Bugis as unit of analysis. A comprehensive research model was developed to gain objective evidence to the study. Details of the process will be discussed in section three. Meanwhile findings and discussion will be explained in section four. As contribution of the study, we tried to argue the implications of current study to the current knowledge as well as practical levels. We will provide the explanations in section five. Lastly, conclusions and direction for future studies will be declared.

2. Literature review

*Acquiring indigenous knowledge*

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For more than five decades, scholars had showed interest in analyzing indigenous society. Dimensions such as culture and customs, language, politics, up to economy field of knowledge has widely explored. In addition, varied of research method had been performed: ethnography, participatory action research, in field observation, case study and survey. Due to its plethora of findings, direction in this field needs to be enlightened.

The current study begins with exploring the true definition of indigenous people. Deriving from the sociological concept of contemporary colonialism, indigenous society can be understood as opposed to colonial assault in terms of politic and modernization culture brought by the migrants (Alfred and Comtassel 2005, 611). Differences in perspective, values and beliefs can be a clear distinction between indigenous and migrants society. Uniquely, our society tends to recognize knowledge of migrants as a modern way of thought while distinguishing with the original paradigm. Furthermore, several studies confirmed the idea (Hirtz 2003, 890; lorns 1992, 201).

Despite of widely acknowledged, positioning indigenous platform as modest in contra with other facets of perspective would be erroneous. But putting the two concepts as complimentary one another would benefits future studies. For example, studies in social field of knowledge sometimes see innovation as an unformed mountain. There is no guarantee that the new technique may works best. Furthermore, scholars in this field always tried to improve the current knowledge by combining local-village wisdom and city’s perspective (Briggs 2005, 108; Peredo et al. 2004, 112; Agrawal 1995, 421). Along with this spirits, current study focused on two elements of indigenous society: (1) the value-learning systems and (2) local organizations, controls and enforcement. Understanding the learning systems within society may bring us to a well-description on how their paradigm was being developed from time to time. Meanwhile, the understanding of the second point is important to address how external knowledge being induced to the society.

As Grenier (1998,8) argue, working with indigenous knowledge must started with an equality in treating all existing knowledge. The absence of prejudice is absolute to carry-on the process while maintaining objectivity during studies. Moreover, positive appreciation in each finding is needed to perform ways to have knowledge translation among the two facets (Smylie et al. 2004, 141). The ultimate outcome from this stage would be synthesis knowledge which will be tested using their real life-experience.

**Posing willingness to be a hero**

Once the current study succeeded in exploring the overall learning system which developed the entire paradigm of women empowerment in economy, the next stage would be identifying the role of community entrepreneurship as new facets. Relating to development concept proposed by Gutierrez (1990, 149), empowerment should focus on the process of uplifting object’s life situation through personal, interpersonal or even political power. Referring to this idea, women empowerment must be sees as an advance level after dialectics of knowledge – as explained at the previous section. Awareness of their potentiality as well as positive support from the stakeholders’ paradigm will bring courage to women in contributing more to the society.

For most research on women entrepreneurship, most scholars treats entrepreneurship in terms of profit-maximization units which in practice can also share a different meaning. Meanwhile less focus had been given to the psychological motives of becoming women entrepreneurs. Aiming to provide evidence on this matter, current study tried to inserts the concept of community entrepreneurship. Our consideration is based on the extension of motherhood spirits which profound by Aegean (2011) and Brush et al. (2009).
Covered with feminism, motherhood in terms of entrepreneurship had serves as great willingness to give solutions to communities’ social-problem while taking necessary action to deal with poverty. This is the point where motherhood turns out to be a hero that meets community entrepreneurship. Drawing back from the field of knowledge, community entrepreneurship has been understood as a concept in which the hero tried to invite the neighboring society to identify all possible local resource that can be useful to deal with current social issue (Peredo and Chrisman 2006, 313). The aim of this type of business is not only dealing with profit-maximization but more to how the idea may serve wider community while transferring more benefits to the society.

Among numbers of research in entrepreneurship, a community based business was found in a remote sub-Arctic. Explored clearly by Dana (1995), the new type of entrepreneurship was found lies on the spirits to deal with such circumstances. Community who has limited access to some economic resources tends to help each other through capabilities-sharing platform. The excessive party will give their best support to the needy. Once the needs had already fulfilled, the two parties will perform new collaboration to attract more benefits. But uniquely, traditional paradigm of the indigenous people will limit their desire to create more profit. This is why most scholars acknowledged the actor or actress in the context of heroism.

3. Research method

Aims to providing clear model of women empowerment, current study had used qualitative study through focus group discussion, the Delphi technique and series of in-depth interview among actor and actress in this field. Two rounds of FGD had been performed for this study. The first FGD was held in late August 2016. Attended by 9 participants (out of 12 invitations), among them there are 3 feminist activists, 2 female-sociology academicians, 2 male-public figures and 2 indigenous women entrepreneurs. With average of 39 years old, master-degree holder and more than 7 years of experience in dealing with gender-equality issues, the discussion succeeded in identifying several dimensions to explain the observed phenomenon. Each dimension was then been tested using in-depth interview using purposive random sampling among four categories: the women entrepreneur, their children and close family, their spouse and respective stakeholder. Current study performed face to face interview in several regions such as West Kalimantan, South Sumatera, West Java, Central Java and Nusa Tenggara Timur. A total of 54 informants had participated in this stage.

In every interview session, we asked their opinion relating to: (1) is it good for indigenous women to actively participate in economy to help the financial performance of the family? (2) How this spirits was developed and nurtured among society? (3) What are the major challenges? (4) How big is the support from the family? And (5) How the society share their willingness to duplicate the movement? Ranging from 20 to 30 minutes, the interview was well documented by considering information consent to the informant. Proper data tabulation was done to validate the role of each dimension – as proposed from the first FGD. Eliminations of dimension that has low validation were done to ensure that the study had revealed knowledge from indigenous context. In addition, new dimension was inserted to maintain the objectivity of the study.

The listed dimensions were then derived into sub-dimensions in order to perform the Delphi techniques. Upon this stage 63 experts from nine tribes were invited to the study, but only 27 had responded and actively participate along the process. The 27 experts are females who are coming from nine-different indigenous tribe. With average of 42 years old, having University degree and more than 9 years of experience on becoming women entrepreneurs, two rounds of Delphi had performed. The study referred to Landeta (2006, 472) in conducting this stage.
Lastly, the second FGD was performed in late February 2017 to confirm the findings while developing model for further agenda. The current study invited the same participant as of the first FGD but one informant failed to give response thus leaving 8 experts to justify the model.

4. Findings and discussion

Possible dimension as explanation variables to indigenous women heroism

At the first FGD, current study had put indigenous women mindset as the central point. Four important issues had been successfully addressed: (1) how far is our culture able to appreciate women heroism in terms of economy, (2) discrimination in women entrepreneurship context, (3) how each actress reacts to the current situation and (4) what would be the future development of this matter.

In order to provide the most objective insight, all participants agreed to begin with the descriptions on how the paradigm of women’s role had been built in indigenous society. Famous as the biggest archipelago in the world, Indonesia is a nation who positioning the Almighty God as the first formal-life philosophy. This directly affects citizens’ life including the local society. The strong influence of religion is easily seen in almost every traditional ceremony. They will start the event with prayer and ended up with a thanksgiving in a form of prayer.

Departing from the facts, the root of culture would be the unification among faith, beliefs and the local wisdom without able to decipher which is the most dominant influence. Our analysis on the nine-observed tribes seven of them are beliefs in the true position of women as male companion. It implicitly implies the second position of women in terms of economy. They are obliged to taking care of the family and household matters including children education matters. For financial matters the position of women in this paradigm is more to efficiency achiever rather than investment decision maker.

On contrary, the other two tribes are highly appreciating gender equality matters. In this cultural context, male and female shares common understanding concerning their roles. Spirits of democracy and openness should be upheld firmly. In terms of financial-economy, women have rights to earn income from any means of work including by becoming an entrepreneur but not as an obligation. Up to this point, it is possible to address socio-cultural theory as basic motives.

On the development of subsequent civilization, the idea of gender equality had slowly being informally adopted by the previous seven tribes. Several participants admitted the progress as good signal for the society. Over post financial crisis in late 1998, women’s role in economy becomes more significant. As a living example, more families tend to be managed by a working mom. This fact played vital role in today’s younger generation school of thoughts. Many children have now seen their working mommy as a common thing, thus strengthening heroism motives with social learning perspective.

“We cannot denied that today’s social-economy context has provided wide space for women to excel in terms of financial autonomy, especially in sustaining the family's economy”- A 41 years old feminist activist with more than 9 years of entrepreneurship experience.

The massive growth of acceptance for the idea of women heroism in some tribes was also triggered by the role of friendship. Inhabitants by hundreds of tribe, cultural integration among tribes happened in every land of the country. Immigrants with one paradigm tend to fuse their beliefs with the majority of values implemented by the locals. Though they might retain the vital beliefs, but for those which can be compromised, migrants tend to adopt the local thoughts. The unification process may happen through social friendship. Dialectic between the two paradigms
mostly won by the local values, thus it is plausible to posed social network perspective as motives of women heroism.

“Cultural assimilation is now inevitable. Immigrants with gender-inequality paradigm might shift their views once they are inhabitant the land surrounded by gender-equality paradigm”- A 35 years old sociology academicians with more than 6 years of experience in studying women empowerment policy.

Once we acknowledged social network perspective as motives then it is also possible to pose a self-motivational perspective up in the context. The idea was based in reality that noble values lay within each man. By reflecting on the living example (i.e. through deeper self-contemplation, or influence from mass media) spirits of heroism can be appear. It will become stronger once stakeholders’ appreciation can be obtained.

Succeed in identifying all possible dimensions the next stage was trying to find support from academic literature. Table 1 will briefly explain theoretical background for each dimension.

Table 1. Theoretical support for each possible dimension

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Dimension &amp; sub dimension</th>
<th>Theoretical support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>SLT1</td>
<td>Entrepreneurial family background</td>
<td>Bandura (1971)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>SLT2</td>
<td>Life’s reflections - childhood economic status</td>
<td>Bandura (1971)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>SLT3</td>
<td>Business characterization on early ages (learning through modeling)</td>
<td>Bandura (1971)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>SLT4</td>
<td>Strong family support</td>
<td>Bandura (1971)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>SCT1</td>
<td>A supportive norms and believes</td>
<td>Noguera et al. (2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>SCT2</td>
<td>Positive response from the stakeholder</td>
<td>Baughn and Chua (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>SCT3</td>
<td>Strong entrepreneurial spirits from the society</td>
<td>Baughn and Chua (2006)</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>SCT4</td>
<td>Hero characterization</td>
<td>Bandura (1971)</td>
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<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>SMP3</td>
<td>Independence motives</td>
<td>Kephart and Schumacher (2005)</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>SMP4</td>
<td>Economic motives</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>SNT1</td>
<td>Number of networks</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Effective mentoring system from network</td>
<td>Noguera et al. (2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>SNT3</td>
<td>Positive dialectics within network</td>
<td>Noguera et al. (2013)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author documentation

The voice of indigenous society

Succeed in performing series of in-depth interview among 54 informants among five provinces, current study posited pathways for heroism motives as seen on Figure 1. The clock-wise analysis begins with women as actress. Becoming a hero for their community is not something that has been planned on early stage. From the nine-observed tribes, only two of them who strictly justified women empowerment in economic terms as things that are not ideal while the rest mentioned that as long as it is not forbidden by the religion rules, then they are plausible.

“I have faith that what we (means women) did for the community is the right thing according to our faith. Moreover, it is highly appreciated to help others. Though we are dealing with community business but it is all using social oriented in order to achieve a just society. all we
have to do is to create balance and harmony between becoming mother, wife and community leader"- 35 years old married-indigenous women entrepreneurs with four under-age kids.

The local beliefs played strong role in determining what is right for the society. The influence becomes stronger in regions where gender-equality is acknowledged fully by the religion authority. In most cases they are the benchmark for the society before they justify their decision. Having considered this matter, we depicted demographic aspect as the second dots.

Figure 1. Map of heroism motives

Source: Author conceptualization

Now from the children perspective, heroism motive for their mommy is strengthening by the social network perspective. Although they are currently inhabitants wide spread area of the region but since they have been operated within closed-system society then every negative opinion are actually easily distributed. That is why the social network perspective played an important role.

“At early stage (15 years ago) it was not easy to accept the fact that our mommy needs to perform multiple roles – as mommy and as community leader because it was mostly dominated by male. Our friends were frequently makes fun of us. But since the immigrants inhabitant this area, we started to share the same experience. I can easily make friendship with their children…after several years, my old fellows started to understand this matter” – 24 years old male whom his mommy had been served the community for more than 16 years.

The above statement also expressed by the spouses. While their children sees the changes in social network as a simple thing, most of male think that living evidence is needed to show that the new perspective is benefited the entire society. Therefore the current study concluded that self-motivation perspective also played important roles.
“I might say that 20 years ago, the situation was not as conducive as what we have today. Rejections from the neighborhood are strong just because our society sees women as male companion. Thus if they helped us, it means that we are incapable to manage the family in terms of economic. It is totally embarrassing. I barely sure that she also feel the same way. Just because we hold on to strong believe that this is good for our society then we keep continue sharing our contribution to the society” – A 49 years old male, the husband of 42 years old community business leader with five kids.

As consequences living in remote area which lack of educational access, most indigenous people used living benchmark from surrounding public figure to portray their future dreams. The young generation had duplicates the paradigm from their parents and try to live under the same platform. Positive as well as negative experience in living with a working mommy becomes the basis for their preference. Thus it is possible to positioned social learning perspective as another dot.

“Our society is actually learning a lot from the family. My mom was also a working mom. She opened Batik factory which employed more than 22 people from our neighborhood. Even me and my sister had to spare time with her daily routine but we acknowledged the condition as the best not only for our family but also for the society. That is why today I gave my wife enough rooms to be a hero in her ages” – A 37 years old husband of 35 years old women entrepreneurs with three kids.

For an indigenous people who currently live in bigger city, cultural assimilation is undeniable. When the civilization has moved towards the appreciation of women heroism for their society, then similar spirits are easily being accepted. Therefore we put civilization as the last dot.

“Our society tends to make peace with current progress of our civilization. Leaving enough space for women to become local heroes are plausible. And I think our society tend to move unto this direction. We must be thankful for our mom who already become the hero for our community, especially by providing community entrepreneurship that deals with poverty” – A 48 years old male community leaders.

The Delphi

All the above six dots (as heroism motives for women empowerment) were then being tested using Delphi techniques which followed by 27 experts. Aiming to validate the hierarchical order among the six, we deployed two rounds of Delphi. The consensus of this step can be seen on Table 2. From this table we may concludes that our Delphi had confirmed the hierarchical motives summarized from the field studies. Several additional dimensions including self-actualization and civilization perspective tend to make the portrayed motive become clearer.

5. Implications

Current study shared three significant contributions to academic fields. First relating to how indigenous society develops their knowledge. Our study found that they are capable in integrating local wisdom with demand from their respective civilization. Strong influence from external factor such as religion authority is found to play a significant role in women empowerment process. Because through systematic process, local authority consistently uplifting the local values as the practical norms that direct the overall stakeholders’ paradigm. Thus it would be benefits to develop knowledge from indigenous society in order to perform an empowerment effort.
The study tried to observe the women’s role in community development especially for an indigenous society. Using Indonesia’s perspective, the study deployed nine tribes to provide explanations on two folds questions: how indigenous society sees women’s role in community economy and what are the antecedents for this noble idea. In order to maintain the objectivity of the findings, the study used a clock wise perspective among four actors – the women, their children, spouse and respective stakeholder. As result, we highlights the role of socio-cultural
perspective, demographic, social network, self-motivation, social learning and civilization as major motives.

Bibliography


