
Board characteristics and environmental performance in Indonesian family business

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Abstract: This study investigates the impact of board characteristics on environmental performance in listed Indonesian family companies. We analysed 130 listed family firms using unbalanced panel method. Results reveal that board characteristics do not affect environmental performance, i.e., agency problem II. Environmental performance is a strategic non-financial issue, and it has several consequences, including external stakeholders and costs. Environmental performance is also not influenced by family ownership. This finding is important in the international market because many Indonesian family businesses deal with several foreign investors and international business.

Keywords: environmental strategy; management family decision and incentives; family coalition.

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1 Introduction

Environmental issue is important for firms because it – although non-financial and voluntary – can influence management strategies. Berrone and Gomez-Mejia (2009) asserted that high environmental performance can create low operating costs and access to several resources and increase customer and employee interest.

In Indonesia, several pollution cases involving firm operations have occurred (e.g., Lapindo mud, haze in Sumatra Island, oil spill in Balikpapan, East Kalimantan, industrial waste and marine pollution from ship fires). The Ministry of Environment of Indonesia (KLH) implemented Rule Nos. 7/2014, which states that every firm is responsible for its activities with environmental effects. The consequences of the environmental failure caused by manufacturing activities are punishment and a fine of at least Rp3 billion and a maximum of Rp9 billion. In 2015, the Supreme Court of Indonesia ordered PT. Kallista Alam, a palm oil company, to disburse \$26 million (£21 million) in fines and reparations for its cut-and-burn practices in the Tripa peat swamp region (Aba and Maria, 2017). Infringement of and irresponsibility towards environmental issues cause legal and economic consequences.

For regulating firm operations related to environmental issues, KLH issued a program to assess the effort of people responsible for the business or activity in controlling environmental pollution or damage. The program also evaluates the management of hazardous and toxic waste materials called PROPER (KLH, 2014). PROPER assessment consists of documents regarding

- the performance summary of environmental management
- environmental management system
- energy efficiency, reduce; reuse; recycle (3R) of B3 (hazardous and toxic materials) waste
- 3R non-solid B3 waste
- emission reduction water efficiency
- biodiversity community empowerment (KLH, 2014).

Another motivation for research is to find how family ownership addresses uncertainty in currency crisis. Family ownership also deals with international market because many listed Indonesian family businesses are supported by foreign investors and multinational markets in terms of exportation and importation. Lindrianasari et al. (2017) found that company export level is relevant to environmental quality certification. Zacarías et al.

(2017) proposed an entrepreneurship model to decompose firms, thus enabling industry residues to transform into commercial products in multinational companies in Monterrey (Mexico). They claimed that externality market failures deal with industry residues. Withisuphakorn (2018) found that CSR is verified as a valuable investment option.

Researchers conducted several environmental accounting studies. Gunardi et al. (2016) found that company size, profitability and public stock ownership influence CSR reporting, but leverage and liquidity do not influence such reporting. Malarvizhi and Matta (2016) argued that no relationship exists between environmental disclosure and firm performance in India. Haninun et al. (2018) reported that environmental performance and disclosure positively affect financial performance in Indonesia.

Listed family companies in Indonesia are dominant at approximately 51% (PWC, 2014). They contribute approximately 25% of GDP (PWC, 2014). The contribution and financial and non-financial performance of Indonesian family businesses on GDP motivate us to investigate this field. In 2014–2016, the economic performance of Indonesia decreased. Lemmon and Lins (2003) highlighted that crisis period is captured as an exogenous factor, which is significantly lowered to obtain return of investment opportunities.

The next motivation is how family ownership combines with its control behaviour in this economic condition. Family ownership deals with management to adjust its decision to control shareholder goals. Berrone et al. (2010) stated that family businesses are mostly influenced by controlling families in their preferred strategy agendas that balance economic and socio-emotional goals. These agendas also focus on meeting legal requirements and implementing pollution controls. In family businesses, environmental strategy is part of the management decision, which is managed by controlling shareholders through management entrenchment. Sharma (2000) argued that family firm management may pursue environmental strategies to avoid legal sanctions and create image reputation for stakeholders. This research is different from previous works that do not explore board characteristics, which may affect the management decision regarding environmental issues.

Our study contributes to explain the mechanism of board characteristics in environmental decisions, which are reflected in firm performance. Moreover, this research explains the impact of controlling shareholders in the family business model.

2 Conceptual framework

2.1 Resource dependence theory

Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) mentioned that resource dependence theory suggests that directors with diverse resources, long-term experiences, intellectual capital and expertise in their fields can give better information, advice and access to many resources for firm strategies than their counterparts.

Hillman and Dalziel (2003) argued that the board has two functions:

- monitor
- facilitator.

The board must ensure that the board acts according to shareholder interest in the family firm model, indicating the coalition of agents and principals because of familiness as the

form of agency problem II (Tokarczyk, 2007). The board should also access information and other resources as a practice of resource dependence theory. Kassinis and Vafeas (2006) argued that one of the board duties is to design environmental strategy so that the importance of diverse board resources for facing environmental issues can increase.

2.2 Agency theory

Jensen and Meckling (1976) argued that agency theory explains the difference of agent and principal interests. It also drives agent and principal conflicts. Wolfenzon (1999) debated their idea and mentioned that agency problem I is not greater than agency problem II in concentrated ownership. Wolfenzon (1999) claimed that dispersed ownership creates many kinds of interests but cannot influence individually as great as in concentrated ones. Wolfenzon's (1999) argument protects minority shareholders in the concentrated ownership system. This agency problem is called agency problem II, in which agent and principal conflicts are minimised by reducing various interests. Conflicts of controlling and minority shareholders rise when voting rights are implied. These conflicts infer the weakness of the concentrated ownership system. In this research object, ownership characteristics rely on the concentrated model, which creates agency problem II.

2.3 Stakeholder theory

Freeman (1984) argued that the previous goal of firms was to make money from shareholders. However, such firms also had to satisfy the need of their stakeholders. Mitchel et al. (2011) stated that in prioritising stakeholders who influence firms, family businesses feature exhaustive family member involvement. This approach led to different goals and behaviours in family businesses than in non-family businesses. Such goals and behaviours were mostly altered by stakeholder power, legitimacy and importance.

2.4 Family board and environmental performance

Rodrigue et al. (2013) argued that firms with proactive orientation strategies increase environmental performance. Iatridis (2013) found a positive relationship between board characteristics and environmental profiles because boards represent resource provision and their role on environmental strategies. Neubaum et al. (2012) suggested that family-controlled businesses are effective in encompassing demands from their internal and external stakeholders. Family businesses also display higher investments in proactive environmental practices than non-family businesses (Berrone et al., 2010; Sharma and Sharma, 2011). Agency problem II states that family involvement in management focuses on the direction of controlling shareholders. Family involvement may contribute to raise competitive advantages for the institution through high social responsibility and financial resource by reducing costs of environmental issues and then obtaining economic sustainability and longevity (Tokarczyk et al., 2007).

H₁: Family ownership has a positive impact on environmental performance.

2.5 Educational background or environmental expertise of board management and environmental performance

De Viller et al. (2017) found that the lack of knowledge and resources in board structures cause difficulty in realising environmental performance. Implementation cost increases with complex director networks and experiences when environmentally efficient production technology is further learned (Homroy and Slechten, 2018). Agrawal and Knoeber (2001) argued that directors with legal background are advantageous because of their high-cost environmental legal consequences. Therefore, boards with law experts are expected to monitor environmental practices and create better environmental performance than those without such experts.

Fama and Jensen (1983) suggested that board of directors' decision-making is initially tasked with monitoring and advising senior management. Thus, directors with environmental experience can narrow information gap between agents and principals (Pfeiffer and Salancik, 1978). Laux and Laux (2009) recommended the expertise of directors who focus on environmental performance and are supported to do most of their work related to environmental strategies. Kroll et al. (2008) argued that the appropriate experience and expertise of boards in environmental issues are positively linked to good environmental performance.

H₂: Educational background/environmental expertise of board management positively influences environmental performance.

Table 1 describes variable definition in this research.

Table 1 Variable definition

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Code</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Source(s)</i>
<i>Dependent</i>			
Environmental performance	PROPER	Average score of PROPER achieved by each family firm	KLH
<i>Independent</i>			
Family board	FAMBOARD	Percentage of family members who serve as top management (e.g., CEO and directors)	AR
Board with education background related to environmental issues/environmental expertise	ENVBOARD	Binary variable with a score of 1 for the presence of board with educational background related to environmental issues or having any expertise in environmental responsibility, 0 for others	AR
<i>Control</i>			
Family ownership	OWN	Percentage of ownership by family members	AR, ICMD
Leverage	LEV	Ratio of total debt and total assets	FR

FR: Financial Report, ICMD: Indonesia Capital Market Directory, AR: Annual Report, KLH: Ministry of Environment of Indonesia.

2.6 Research framework

Environmental performance is the dependent variable in this study. The independent variables are family involvement in ownership and in management. We also employed control variables, such as profitability and leverage. On the basis of the conceptual framework, we set up the econometrics model for this research as follows:

$$\text{PROPER} = \alpha + \beta_1\text{FAMBOARD}_{it} + \beta_2\text{ENVBOARD}_{it} + \beta_3\text{LEV}_i + \beta_4\text{OWN}_{it} + \varepsilon_i$$

3 Methodology

We observed 135 listed PROPER-family observations ($n = 42$ for 2014, $n = 41$ for 2015, and $n = 52$ for 2016). We deduced firms with incomplete data ($n = 2$ for 2014, $n = 2$ for 2015, and $n = 1$ for 2016), resulting in 130 observations. Finally, we analysed all data using unbalanced panel by EViews Software version 9.0. Table 2 explains the fields of our samples.

Table 2 Fields of samples

<i>Description</i>	<i>2014</i>		<i>2015</i>		<i>2016</i>	
	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>%</i>
Agriculture	7	17.5	6	15.38	10	18.37
Manufacture	29	72.5	30	76.92	37	2.04
Real estate and property	1	2.5	1	2.56	1	73.47
Service	2	5	1	2.56	1	2.04
Others	1	2.5	1	2.56	2	4.08
<i>Total</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>39</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>51</i>	<i>100</i>

Source: Data observed

4 Result and analysis

Using unbalanced panel for 2014–2016 observation years, we analysed 130 listed Indonesian family companies.

Given the results in Panels A, B and C, we had to select between fixed effect model and common effect model. In the Chow test, fixed effect is more appropriate than the common effect. Therefore, we employed the fixed effect model.

Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics and multivariate regression using the panel data method. Panel E is a multivariate regression that employs the unbalanced panel method. After considering the proper model analysis, we found that adjusted R-square is 0.306336. The analysis also reveals that the model in this study is reliable, with the dependent variable having 30–63% capability of explaining independent variables. In addition, family board (FAMBOARD) and board with environmental background or expertise (ENVBOARD) have no significant effect on environmental performance as

proven by the probability values of 0.3808 and 0.3274, respectively (more than α value 0.005). The findings reject H_1 and H_2 . T -statistic informs that both have negative signs. Table 3 explains output of Chow, Hausman, and Lagrange Multiplier test.

Table 3 Output of Chow, Hausman, and Lagrange multiplier test

<i>Panel A</i>			
<i>Redundant fixed effects test</i>			
Effects Test	Statistic	d.f.	Prob.
Cross-section F	2.053661	(54, 71)	0.0023
Cross-section Chi-square	122.299391	54	0.0000
<i>Panel B</i>			
Correlated random effects – Hausman test			
Equation: Untitled			
Test cross-section random effects			
Test summary	Chi-Square Statistic	Chi-Square d.f.	Prob.
Cross-section random	7.799112	4	0.0992
<i>Panel C</i>			
	Cross-section	Time	Both
Breusch-Pagan	1.191471	0.072995	1.264466
	(0.2750)	(0.7870)	(0.2608)

Source: Output of statistical analysis using EViews 9.0

Our control variables are family ownership (OWN) and leverage (LEV). OWN has no significant effect, with a probability value of 0.1372 (more than α value 0.005). LEV has a negative significant effect, with a probability value of 0.0427.

In addition, family board and education or environmental expertise of board management have no impact on environmental performance in Indonesian family businesses. Families involved in board management do not affect environmental performance because familiness has influenced their decision. Damayanti et al. (2018) added that such families act as a coalition, which focuses on the direction of controlling shareholders. In currency crisis, controlling shareholders prefer to maximise their private benefit by maximising monetary benefit through their ownership in the stock market (Damayanti et al., 2018).

Chua et al. (1999) argued that dominant coalition of familiness-agents and principals is potentially sustainable across generations. Chua et al. (1999) stated that family involvement in business has several consequences. Eddleston and Kellermanns (2007) found that dysfunctionality in business occurs because of negative family involvement. The degree and tenacity of conflicts among family members are intensified because they have different visions and goals. Hillman and Dalziel (2003) noted that corporate strategies and programs are influenced by director involvement. Eisenhardt (1989) asserted that environmental issues are unpalatable to risk-averse managers. Hence, they may be reluctant to allocate costs that cannot give them private benefits. Moreover, to obtain high environmental performance, the management needs additional investments (Berrone and Gomez-Mejia, 2009), which are controlled by principals.

Table 4 Descriptive statistics and multivariate regression using least square panel data

<i>Panel D</i>					
	<i>PROPER</i>	<i>FAMBOARD</i>	<i>ENVBOARD</i>	<i>OWN</i>	<i>LEV</i>
Mean	2.910897	21.31660	0.523077	54.11595	48.04977
Median	3.000000	16.66667	1.000000	55.53000	47.49576
Maximum	4.000000	75.00000	1.000000	97.20000	124.2964
Minimum	2.000000	0.000000	0.000000	12.05000	6.618702
Std. dev.	0.385435	21.09807	0.501399	20.86754	20.62631
Samples	130				
<i>Panel E</i>					
<i>Variable</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>	<i>Std. error</i>	<i>t-Statistic</i>	<i>Prob.</i>	
C	3.139003	0.429545	7.307746	0.0000	
FAMBOARD	-0.004250	0.004820	-0.881866	0.3808	
ENVBOARD	-0.112560	0.114149	-0.986077	0.3274	
LEV	-0.012272	0.005948	-2.063218	0.0427	
OWN	0.009444	0.006281	1.503427	0.1372	
R-squared	0.618216		Adjusted R-squared	0.306336	
F-statistic	1.982226		S.E. of Regression	0.321016	
Prob. (F-statistic)	0.003106		Sum squared resid	7.316622	

Source: Output of statistical analysis using EViews 9.0

The environmental education or expertise of board management do not influence environmental performance given the power of controlling shareholders and familiness as the practice of agency problem II. As a control variable, family involvement in ownership shows an insignificant effect on environmental performance. Sciascia and Mazzola (2008) argued that family involvement in ownership and in management is given adequate attention because it influences firm strategies.

From stakeholder perspectives in the family business mode, family is one of the most influenced stakeholders, which control firms to satisfy internal and external stakeholders. Although family power dominates family firm decision, family firms do not deny that costs may affect their financial performance. Leverage impact on environmental performance is negatively significant, implying that increasing leverage decreases firm image. Increasing leverage may occur by avoiding environmental regulations. Controlling shareholders do not involve leverage incentives. Risk-averse management behaviour is the reason leverage is considered.

5 Conclusion

In family businesses, agency problem II is a key factor, as it drives controlling shareholders to strongly influence management decision regarding environmental issues. Stakeholder approach in the context of family business also posits family as the most

powerful stakeholder who can influence the management decision. In the fluctuating economic situation, controlling shareholders are also motivated to make entrenchment. Directing the focus of control management to environmental decisions is difficult for these shareholders. Nevertheless, the management still addresses environmental issues. The finding in leverage variable indicates that the management practices risk-averse behaviour, produces efficient cost, and follows the direction of controlling shareholders.

Furthermore, we must understand how the management and controlling shareholders perceive environmental issues. The model must explore several factors beyond this research.

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