

**What makes a good sport leader: Lessons from investigating ideal leadership
for Indonesian football**

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Abstract

Purpose - Leaderships of the Indonesian football in the last 10 years have struggled with dynamic challenges from internal and external groups. We presume that an effective leadership is needed to provide stability. This qualitative study, using sport governance perspective, is aimed at answering question of what kind of leadership that is needed by an organisation that shares similarities with football associations. We also tried to discover what makes a good sport leader and why such leadership is important.

Design/methodology/approach - A focus group comprising sport scholars was conducted to get initial sport leadership attributes. These attributes were then assessed in a qualitative survey by 23 experts in sport management and governance across the world. The survey also explored other additional traits and importance of leadership in sport organisations.

Findings – This study finds eight leadership traits that are recommended to be possessed by top leaders in sport organisations, in order to bring effective organisational performance. Experts in this study also confirm that good leadership is very critical to sport organisations.

Originality/value - This study adds to existing knowledge of sport governance on board roles, board performance and sport leadership. In addition, this research also fills the gap of Indonesian sport governance context which has been rarely studied. Findings of this study can also be adopted by sport organisations who may have been struggling to identify their best-suited leaders.

Keywords Sport governance, Sport leadership, Sport board, Non-profit sport organisation, Football association

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

There have been limited literature reviews about sport governance applied in Indonesia. In addition, to the best of our knowledge, studies about leadership attributes in sport organisations are also rare. However, reason to conduct this study was motivated by a series of crises happening at the Indonesian Football Association (PSSI) from September 2018 to the first quarter of 2019. Hence, this study was initially purposed to give some clues to PSSI and add knowledge and awareness about sport governance in Indonesia.

Apparent issues had been around in Indonesian football as PSSI struggled to properly manage and govern the sport with series of leadership conflicts, football violence and match-fixing scandals being unresolved comprehensively, especially since late 2000s. We then noticed a problem of lacking leadership qualities at the PSSI, supported by a fact that PSSI reigns had not finished their tenures soundly and smoothly in the last 10 years. In addition, football-related fatalities, which have been at the peak recently, and match-fixing scandals also support the argument with lack of governance understanding being assumed.

We followed up those problems with a study aimed to investigate ideal leadership in an organisation that is typical to football associations, to assess our presumption that PSSI had been struggling to find its best leaders. We argued that such good leaders could help PSSI so that

crisis can be handled thoroughly in the future. We then added another research question aimed at grasping importance of leadership in sport organisations.

We reckon that, apart from limited reviews about Indonesia's sport governance, this paper can supplement another significance in the field, in which qualitative expert assessment uniquely becomes the main tool in collecting data. Moreover, we feel that this study can also add richness and newness to already established studies related to sport governance, particularly the ones about board roles and function (Esteve *et al.*, 2011; Ferkins and Shilbury, 2012, 2015; Inglis, 1997; Shilbury and Ferkins, 2011; Yeh and Taylor, 2008), board structure and performance (Brown, 2005; Hoye, 2006, 2007; Hoye and Cuskelly, 2003a) and sport leadership (Billsberry *et al.*, 2018; Ferkins *et al.*, 2009; Ferkins *et al.*, 2018; Hoye and Cuskelly, 2003b; Takos *et al.*, 2018).

2. Background

In September 2018, Indonesians were shocked by a viral footage showing a football fan brutally mobbed to death by a group of supporters around Bandung Lautan Api Stadium in Bandung, West Java, just hours before a classic intense match between Persib Bandung and Persija Jakarta, two top-tier clubs known as arch rivals. The dead victim, later identified as Haringga Sirila, was a 23-year-old Persija supporter who decided to come to the stadium despite early high-level warning since the game has always been regarded as high risk by security officials, considering its past rivalries which often resulted casualties.

The day after the match which ended 3-2 to Persib's win, hashtag #RIPHaringga became trending on Twitter in Indonesia (Tehusijarana and Dipa, 2018). Public figures including Jakarta Governor Anies Baswedan, West Java Governor Ridwan Kamil and Alissa Wahid, daughter of

WHAT MAKES A GOOD SPORT LEADER: LESSONS FROM INDONESIAN FOOTBALL

Indonesia's former president Abdurrahman Wahid, condemned the malicious killing as well as mourned Sirila's passing (Tehusijarana and Dipa, 2018). Public in general, condemned the mob attack, which is opposed to the nation's basic humanity value as stated in the second tenet of Indonesia's state ideology Pancasila. The police named 14 suspects as the perpetrators, with seven out of them were adolescents (Ramadhan, 2019).

With regard to sporting consequences, the Indonesian Football Association, or PSSI, imposed a relatively tough sanction on Persib, including preventing the club from playing at its home ground for the rest of the season and obligation to pay fines, although these sanctions were later relaxed (Fauzan, 2019). Furthermore, the Indonesian Youth and Sports Ministry called the football league to be suspended for two weeks, to give PSSI an evaluation (Heriyanto, 2018). The Indonesian Professional Footballers Association (APPI) announced that its members did not want to play until a peace agreement from all supporter groups was made (Heriyanto, 2018).

Nonetheless, since then, the fires had always come to PSSI, with numerous pressures coming from outside, most notably the media. Journalists had written stories about the event simultaneously for more than two weeks, followed up by other PSSI-crisis-related stories, of which it extended to months later, ending up as early as April 2019.

Football-related fatalities in Indonesia have surged recently, according to data compiled by Save Our Soccer, a pressure group, which reveals that more than 60 people have died because of football violence since 1995, with most of the incidents occurring in the last decade (Oktora and Sinaga, 2018). Sirila was the seventh fatal victim caused by Persija-Persib rivalry in six years (BBC Indonesia, 2018). The deadly tie began when three Persib fans died after a mob violence in a Persija-versus-Persib match held at Gelora Bung Karno Stadium in Jakarta in 2012 (Heriyanto,

WHAT MAKES A GOOD SPORT LEADER: LESSONS FROM INDONESIAN FOOTBALL

2018). The prolonged feud has since produced other fatalities including the latest with Sirila's death, which was seen as the most brutal out of the precedents.

Public, through the media, then revealed another decay: match fixing. Some activities of match fixing were identified since the police investigated cases involving top officials of the PSSI, a few days after a prominent journalist showcased a TV event with topic about match-fixing allegations in the country's top leagues. In December 2018, police announced the first three suspects, one of whom was a member of the PSSI executive committee (hereafter called PSSI board). That was the first time a match-fixing case in Indonesian football had arguably been proved and charged legitimately by the country's criminal law since the last reported one in 1962, known as *The Senayan Scandal*, a bribery involving a bunch of national team players, which was investigated by the country's sport council to progress to a civil court, and questionably ended in military prison (Hanifan, 2018).

Further, the saga went on with police, as of November 2019, concluding 16 suspects related to latest match-fixing scandals in Indonesia's professional and amateur football leagues (KumparanBOLA, 2019). Four of those suspects were football's top officials, who were the then PSSI interim chairman, two PSSI board members and a PSSI disciplinary committee member.

We see those unexpected events, which were firstly triggered by a fatal incident, bonding together to form a series of crises at the association. We also see it very close to be addressed by sport governance theories. We argue the main problem of the crises was caused by lack of good-governance practices in Indonesian football, which in this context is mainly led by or focusing on the PSSI. The fact that some top officials of the PSSI were involved in the match-fixing scandals is enough to herald improper checks and balances recurring at the association.

3. Context: football governance in Indonesia

Indonesian football has been marred by controversies since the *reformasi* (reforms), an era that began as the country embarked a refreshed political direction as the former authoritarian regime, led by general Suharto, collapsed in late 1990s (Bünthe and Ufen, 2009; Setiawan, 2019). After being restricted for many years, press freedom at the time was revamped, and since has resulted a more broadened and fast information available from the newly growing media outlets (Antara News, 2008). Arguably, eversince, more open discourses in public domain have opened.

Changes in political landscape, more or less, have affected stability of the PSSI, which holds authority to govern the nation's most popular sport. A more open information, added by high demand and intense fanatics to football, have made the association highly exposed by the public who passionately wants Indonesian football to excel internationally. Unfortunately, Indonesia's senior national football team has been underperforming and never won a single trophy in major international competitions since 1991, unlike its junior national teams who triumphed in Southeast Asia's regional championships in 2013 and 2019.

Nurdin Halid, a politician and former PSSI chairman from 2003 to 2011, was pressurised to resign in late 2000s as he had been accused of wrongdoing in public graft cases (Wahyudi, 2019; Wuisan, 2013). For sometimes, he had been adamant to stay at the top, despite leading the association from prison (Hanifan, 2016; Wahyudi, 2019; Wuisan, 2013). But in 2011, a new bloc associated with businessman Arifin Panigoro challenged his tenancy by establishing *Liga Primer Indonesia* (LPI) under supports from some PSSI members (Wuisan, 2013). LPI, an alternative professional league to rival Halid's top-tier Indonesia Super League (ISL), then kicked off in

WHAT MAKES A GOOD SPORT LEADER: LESSONS FROM INDONESIAN FOOTBALL

January 2011 (Sudarmanto, 2011). The dispute between the two blocs, which resulted a dualism, was covered in top news outlets, attracting mediation by the Sports Ministry and the world's football governing body FIFA to form a normalisation committee. A more complicated issue aroused further, as top-tier football clubs also had dualism with two versions of their teams playing both in LPI and ISL with different managers, making internal conflicts at clubs worsen and prolonged in uncertainties (Wuisan, 2013).

After mediation by the normalisation committee, PSSI elected a new chairman Djohar Arifin in July 2011, with some Halid's allies included on the PSSI board. This new leadership was highly unstable as divided stances and opinions were apparent, particularly about dualism of LPI and ISL. A few months after its formation, PSSI leadership at that time was really shaken, as a group on the PSSI board who was seen affiliated with Halid regime, formed an opposition bloc called *Komite Penyelamat Sepakbola Indonesia* (Indonesia's Football Rescue Committee), or KPSI. In March 2012, KPSI held a congress to elect La Nyalla Mattalitti as chairman of a new version PSSI, even though this movement was not recognised by the FIFA and the Court of Arbitration for Sport (Sammy, 2012; Wuisan, 2013).

In 2013, dispute between the two blocs resolved with Mattalitti becoming legitimate PSSI vice chairman, assisting the then chairman Arifin, after a dualism had also occurred with the national football team. Before the resolution, Arifin's version of national team had always been inferior to Mattalitti's team that comprised top existing players, making such pressures coming from outer stakeholders voiced for the two blocs ending the dispute to lessen risk of playing under par in international matches (CNN Indonesia, 2019).

WHAT MAKES A GOOD SPORT LEADER: LESSONS FROM INDONESIAN FOOTBALL

The dualism seemed to be coming to an end, but conflict was not really over. In a congress in 2015, PSSI finally elected Mattalitti as its new chairman, yet it was cancelled by the then sports minister Imam Nahrawi, who did not recognise the congress and decided to bar PSSI's Mattalitti from operating in the country's territory. Nahrawi's justification to shut down PSSI was influenced by a prolonged dualism-case at Persebaya Surabaya, an elite club which was mistreated by the Halid regime in 2010 (Wirawan and Nathaniel, 2017). Unsurprisingly, not long after that government's direct intervention, FIFA banned PSSI from its membership to comply with its own statutes that prohibit any political interference in football associations.

FIFA then lifted PSSI suspension a year later, and granted legitimacy to the newly revived PSSI as Edy Rahmayadi, an army general at the time, was elected new chairman for the association's 2016-2020 leadership term. Rahmayadi's tenure had to finish earlier, nonetheless, after a brutal football-related fatality and match-fixing scandals pressurised him to step down in January 2019. He was not in shortage of jobs as he had won in the 2018 regional elections to become the North Sumatra Governor.

As told in above paragraphs, the PSSI has been long facing dynamic challenges from uncertain circumstances, internally and externally. Those challenges, often transforming into crises, were not vanished even when external powerful parties such as government and world sport organisations stepped into the problems. During those times, crises at the PSSI often hampered the association's top agendas, and are close to what Seeger *et al.* (1998) say about crisis, which is characterised by uncertainties and failure from acquiring organisational high-level priorities. That has made us analysing situations in the Indonesian football governance context, which we come to a resolution that good-governance principles must be adhered as high as possible to create balance of powers between stakeholders which in turn creates stability.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD SPORT LEADER: LESSONS FROM INDONESIAN FOOTBALL

Key stakeholders in Indonesian football are currently held by the PSSI, the Sports Ministry and the Tenth Commission of the House of Representatives who is responsible for sport, education and history. These entities play a key role in Indonesian football development, but very limited studies are available about how these bodies contribute to and interact each other in football. For example, the latter, so far has only produced one act about sport, namely Law No. 3/2005 on National Sports System, which cannot address recent series of supporter deaths albeit they have happened many times in and around public stadiums. That was not the case in the United Kingdom, for instance, when its parliament produced the Football Spectators Act 1989 following inquiries to prior football-related tragedies in 1985 with Bradford City fire disaster and in 1989 with the Hillsborough disaster that resulted significant number of fatalities (Beech, 2013).

4. Literature review

4.1 Sport governance theories

Studies about sport governance have been extensive over the years with range of topics including areas in professional, amateur, Olympic and intercollegiate sports (Hums and MacLean, 2017). Chappelet (2018) suggests that subject of sport governance should be the intersection of corporate governance, as usually practiced in the business sector, and democratic governance, as well-known designed for the public sector. This combination of corporate and democratic values is coherent, as for example, when a sport association sells its league commercial rights using business instinct but at the same time preserving members' rights when it develops policies and regulations.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD SPORT LEADER: LESSONS FROM INDONESIAN FOOTBALL

Governance is a subject relevant to power, authority, control and high-level policy making in organisations (Hums and MacLean, 2017). Brown (2005) and Hoye and Cuskelly (2007) provide theoretical governance models in which sport organisations may adopt into their systems. Those such as democratic-perspective, stakeholder, agency, resource dependency and group/ decision process theories are relevant to be instilled to sport organisations. For instance, the Western democracy has been highly adopted to governance systems of sport, with its common ideals of open election, pluralism, electorate accountability and separation of powers between the legislators and the executives. In addition, stakeholder theory implies that a sport organisation is not only responsible to its members, but also to a wide range of external interest groups such as the government, the media and the spectators. In agency theory, the governance maximises a system that protects interests of a sport organisation's members through the lens of relationship between the board and the executive. Resource dependency theory resonates the urgency of a governance model that is suitable to ensure organisational capabilities that can acquire resources such as funds, sponsorships or loans. While group/ decision process theory emphasises a system that relies on the board's analytical decision-making, knowledge development and members' cohesion within an organisation.

Governance of sport handles a bigger picture of sport organisations and it is often looked at three-level perspectives, whether it is local, national or international (Hums and MacLean, 2017). National sport association is constituted of local members whose collective interests are represented onto a board of representatives elected through a mechanism within a general assembly, or sometimes called as congress, which is also tasked as a legislative entity. Further, group of national sport associations usually forms an international governing body, which has function that is to hold interests between its national member associations (Beech, 2013).

WHAT MAKES A GOOD SPORT LEADER: LESSONS FROM INDONESIAN FOOTBALL

Sport governance therefore refers to “the exercise of power and authority in sport organisations, including policy making, to determine organisational mission, membership, eligibility, and regulatory power, within the organisation’s appropriate local, national or international scope” (Hums and MacLean, 2017, p. 5). In addition, sport governance can also be defined as responsibility for functioning and overall direction of an organisation with necessary and institutionalised components of sport codes (Ferkins *et al.*, 2009). Based on those two definitions, we can comprehend that governance in sport is a structure and process by which stakeholders in a certain sport ecosystem express and fight for their interests through exert of powers and institutionalised forms of actions.

Because interests expressed by stakeholders vary in different ecosystems, divergence can be seen among them (Hums and MacLean, 2017). For example, interests expressed by Indonesian sport stakeholders may be different with those in European countries. In general, sport stakeholders in Indonesia focus highly on high performance, in which medal success at international level is way more prioritised rather than participant sport, which is often intended for better public health. Participant sport in Indonesia has been for years significantly neglected, even though it has been institutionalised in many sport and governmental organisations. Moreover, that conflicted priority may be affected by how development of sport is operated within and related to a region’s culture, politics or economy. Dorsey and Sebastian (2015) explained how Indonesian football was very intertwined with politics as lots of political figures became top persons in football. Their view supports that governance of Indonesian football, led by PSSI, is also correlated with the country’s political development, as implicated in the previous explanation of stakeholder theory.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD SPORT LEADER: LESSONS FROM INDONESIAN FOOTBALL

The contemporary model of how sport stakeholders express their interests, however, forms a system that elicits more balanced powers. Scholars have identified that increased pressures from external side can influence how a sport organisation shapes its governing patterns, strategies and performances (Beech, 2013; Winand *et al.*, 2010; Winand *et al.*, 2014). Amara *et al.* (2005) point out that governance in football is now different with that in the past, when a top-down and hierarchical model was common up to the early 1970s. Nowadays, “a complex web of interrelationships between stakeholders” works better replacing the old term of top-down sport government (Amara *et al.*, 2005, p. 191). This is in line with the background story of this paper, which tells an Indonesian prominent journalist who showcased a TV event about match-fixing allegations that eventually brought down the incumbent PSSI leader. Exchange of interests and powers within an ecosystem, is then becoming an important characteristic of sport governance to reach some ideals in which ethical conduct often becomes the main purpose (Beech, 2013; Chelladurai, 2017).

That ideal image has been translated into sets of principles called good sport governance, which defines a concept or framework aimed to achieve governance ideals within a sport ecosystem. Geeraert (2018) sets out four dimensions of good governance that can be applied in national sport federations, namely transparency, internal accountability and control, democratic processes and societal responsibility. Another view can be derived from Henry and Lee (2004), who suggest seven principles of good sport governance: transparency, accountability, democracy, social responsibility, equity, effectiveness and efficiency. Principles incorporated in those dimensions, when implemented thoroughly, are believed to increase credibility and effectiveness of a sport organisation, let alone its capability to resist unethical culture. Chappelet (2018) argues that term ‘good governance,’ as firstly popularised by the World Bank, should be

shifted to be rather called ‘better governance’. The latter is considered after an argument that governance in sport is very dynamic, so that it must be monitored and bettered over time. In order to achieve that, a research done by Booth *et al.* (2015) shows that key governance indicators implicating participation of stakeholders, specified board and management roles, openness of information through better communication, ethical decision-making, social responsibility and people’s competencies should be exercised as high as possible.

4.2 Prevalence of sport NGBs’ governance

As context of this study is more focused on national-level governance, of which we particularly observe leadership at the PSSI, therefore we consider providing understanding about governance system specifically practiced in national governing bodies (NGB).

Sport NGBs are commonly non-profit organisations which are made up by regional and local members (Lang *et al.*, 2018; Persson, 2011; Winand *et al.*, 2010). Hoye and Cuskelly (2007, p. 7) note that sport organisations, which provide “participation and competition opportunities” to its members, are considered non-profit. Thiel and Mayer (2009) explain that non-profit sport organisations are mainly characterised by two main missions: preserving and representing members’ interests and providing sport programs. This kind of organisation does not make profit as a top priority, although it still can pursue revenues from sport-related activities. It is then more driven by altruistic values between its members, rather than individual economic functions, which are often highly prioritised in commercial enterprises.

Interests in NGBs are usually expressed by the members through an executive-representative mechanism called the board. This body, comprising persons elected and appointed by the members, is regarded as the highest decision-making structure within sport associations,

WHAT MAKES A GOOD SPORT LEADER: LESSONS FROM INDONESIAN FOOTBALL

and its role is very critical since its function is to ensure compliance, control, strategic and policy directions of the sports (Booth *et al.*, 2015; Ferkins and Shilbury, 2012; Shilbury and Ferkins, 2011; Yeh and Taylor, 2008). The Australian Sports Commission stated that one of governance goals is to ensure the board acts in the best interests of the members of non-profit sport organisations or owners in the context of profit-seeking organisations (Hoye and Cuskelly, 2007).

Relations between the board and the executive have been studied and analysed by Ferkins *et al.* (2009), Hoye and Cuskelly (2003b, 2007) and Takos *et al.* (2018). The executive in this context is headed by a director who works in day-to-day operational activities, different with the board who works not in daily basis and is tasked with more strategic activities (Ferkins and Shilbury, 2012; Ferkins *et al.*, 2018). At PSSI and in many sport organisations, the executive director is equivalent to the secretary general title. Hoye and Cuskelly (2007) highlight that in non-profit organisations, separation of powers between the executive and the board is important. Unlike in profit-seeking organisations, the executive director, or the CEO-like secretary general, is better not included on the board of non-profit organisations, and thus not having the right to vote (Hoye and Cuskelly, 2007). In contrast, in corporate or profit-seeking governance settings, the CEO is often a voting member of the board. Practically, lots of CEOs of sport NGBs attend board meetings, but do not have the voting right, as one example is noted at the New Zealand's football NGB (Ferkins *et al.*, 2009). This shared leadership between the board and the executive is topical and subsequently prevalent in sport NGBs.

Meanwhile, the board of sport NGBs is headed by a chairman, sometimes called president in some sport organisations. The chairman is therefore the supreme leader in the structural decision-making of common NGBs (Yeh and Taylor, 2008), even though his power is not

absolute since he is subjected to other board members. Interestingly, chairman and board members of non-profit sport organisations commonly work on a voluntary basis receiving no remuneration (Mittag *et al.*, 2018; Shilbury and Ferkins, 2011; Yeh and Taylor, 2008). In some smaller and traditional organisations, the board performs daily operational activities to some extent, whilst other prevalent boards of sport organisations, especially the bigger and better-performing ones, work strategically in non-daily basis (Booth *et al.*, 2015).

5. Method

This study relies on qualitative methods with qualitative descriptive design. According to Holly (2014), a qualitative descriptive study is built based in naturalistic inquiry that focuses on grasping “how” and “why” of an event or experience (p. 72). It is also mulled over when a study is conducted after a “situation that needs to be addressed for the purpose of understanding” (Holly, 2014, p. 71). As such, we want to address what kind of leaders a sport NGB needs in order to perform effectively and how leadership contributes to sport’s organisational performance seen from governance lens.

This study took two and a half months effectively from data collection commencing in May to analysis and reporting done in mid of July 2019. Settings of the study were all based in Jakarta. We used purposive sampling as it is very relevant to qualitative descriptive design. Purposive sampling is also useful in our study as it seeks to find participants who have “some specific knowledge or expertise relevant to the topic” (Holly, 2014, p. 72).

Phases in collecting data included two steps; Firstly, we conducted a focus group discussion in early May 2019 involving seven sport scholars who were chosen after their education and knowledge in sport studies. This phase, lasting around 60 minutes, was led by the

WHAT MAKES A GOOD SPORT LEADER: LESSONS FROM INDONESIAN FOOTBALL

first author who was tasked to write summary of opinions to get leadership attributes that are relevant to sport organisations.

Secondly, we designed an online questionnaire as the qualitative survey, which was sent by emails to selected participants we considered experts in sport management and governance. As we were aware that subject of sport governance was something new and experts related to it were rare in Indonesia, we decided to also include sport experts from abroad. Further, we involved 23 experts in the survey after we thought that data saturation had been reached. Of these 23 experts, 64% were academics in the areas of sport management, policy and governance with five full professors, four associate professors, two assistant professors and three lecturers, while the rest 36% were practitioners in the sport industry with occupations ranging from sport consultant, researcher, journalist to event manager. Moreover, only 18% of the experts were based in Indonesia, while the majority resided in the Europe (52%), followed by North America (14%), rest of Asia (13%) and Oceania (3%). In terms of educational attainment, majority of the experts (61%) held PhD titles whilst the rest were master's graduates.

In the expert assessment, which is a part of the survey, participants were directed to score their attitudes toward leadership attributes that had been extracted from the focus group earlier. The tool used for assessing those attributes was semantic-differential scale with ratings from 1 for being the least favored to 4 for being the most favored. This kind of scale was chosen after learning that it is useful to assess participants' attitudes without "forcing them into an extreme choice" (Gratton and Jones, 2010, p. 135). Aside from assessing leadership attributes, the questionnaire also asks a few open questions to explore additional traits of an ideal sport leader and to gain insights about importance of leadership in sport organisations.

6. Findings

6.1 What do we obtain from the focus group?

From the focus group, we generated seven attributes that were presumed to be critical for a leader in sport NGB context. These attributes explain that the leader must be rich financially, experienced in the sport, independent, very senior, successful, having a high degree of integrity and far from politics. Further explanations of some of these attributes were added as ‘experienced in the sport’ means he/ she has been involved in the sport for at least five years, ‘independent’ means he/ she is not strongly affiliated with the sport organisation, ‘very senior’ means he/ she has more than 20 years of professional experience and ‘far from politics’ means he/ she is not a politician and/ or not currently a serving top leader in any governmental institutions.

6.2 Confirmed sport leadership attributes

The seven leadership attributes generated in the focus group were then assessed in the qualitative survey by the experts who, in absolute, favored integrity as a must-have attribute for sport leaders, while the remaining six attributes were in divided opinions. However, majority of the experts tended to agree with other five attributes namely experienced in the sport, independent to some extent, very senior, successful and far from politics to be attached to sport leaders. It was only one attribute, ‘rich financially’, which was not favored as a sport leader trait, and thus we felt that it was the only attribute rejected by majority of the experts.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD SPORT LEADER: LESSONS FROM INDONESIAN FOOTBALL

Furthermore, we tried to discover additional traits of sport leaders from the questionnaire's first open question that says: Can you explain in broader sentences about what kind of leader you want to see in football association? Many experts answered this question by reassuring that integrity, independence, far from politics, successful career and seniority are important attributes for a good sport leader, as one expert explained:

[The leader is] ideally someone independent, with good leadership skills. Not subject to political influences or risking conflicts of interest. [...] Because the internal politics of such a member-based organisation can be tricky, the ideal candidate is someone respected, honest, independent, without personal interest but with a strong ability to listen, inspire, lead and build consensus. (Associate professor in sport management at a university in Europe)

Another participant added: *“It has to be an independent person, with experience in managing medium-size operations and having knowledge of the sport industry, the economic and social context”* (Sport governance expert at a university in Europe).

Some participants then highlighted specific additional attributes that were not captured in the focus group. These newly explored attributes, we identified as diplomatic skills and strategic mindsets. We feel that two participants really concluded the finding: *“In my opinion such leader should be a strategist and diplomat, having a successful career and a person with high integrity and independence”* (Researcher at a university in Europe);

Football association [FA] leader needs: Leadership and strategic mind-set to develop the sport and the association within society [...]; integrative capacity to balance competing interests of amateur and professional, competitive and social, male and female, regionally

WHAT MAKES A GOOD SPORT LEADER: LESSONS FROM INDONESIAN FOOTBALL

differing or ethnically and religiously diverse groups within the association; values and integrity to avoid fraud and corruption; the ability to share power within a balanced and mutually controlling set-up and to give up power in a regular cycle of limited terms.

(Senior lecturer in sport politics at a university in Europe)

Excel in diplomacy, after our consideration, is also close with description about ability to listen and accommodate stakeholders, as it is in line with some participants who said of ideal sport leaders. *“Have diplomatic skills, know how to build partnership, cultivate relationship and connection and team building. [They also] need very smart technical assistants. [...]”* (Sport management lecturer at a university in Asia). *“Best FA leaders are listening to other board members and stakeholders and take decisions in the best interests of the FA and its members”* (Professor of sport management at a university in Europe).

Possessing strategic mindsets have been researched by Ferkins and Shilbury (2012) to be an important attribute for effective sport leaders. Being strategic is interpreted as having macroview, visionary and big pictures in directing the sports. As Johnson *et al.* (2011) define strategy as the long-term direction of an organisation, these participants sum up how a sport leader with strategic mindsets is crucial: *“A leader should be conscientious and transparent. They should be able to articulate a clear vision for the organisation as well as a strategy for realising that vision”* (Assistant professor in sport management at a university in North America); *“The leader must be up to date with newest trend in football development and football business, having a great vision for indonesian football, having a strong power [and] willingness to execute his vision”* (Managing director of a football media in Indonesia);

WHAT MAKES A GOOD SPORT LEADER: LESSONS FROM INDONESIAN FOOTBALL

In my country, the chairman is a popular former football player, who does a good impression in the media and has a good understanding of the game, however does not have the vision which should be vital in this position. (Researcher at a university in Europe)

6.3 Importance of leadership in sport

Another open question in the questionnaire is purposed to confirm how impactful good leadership for sport organisations is. This is also to address a governance model called the executive-led model that is explained by Booth *et al.* (2015) and Hoye and Cuskelly (2007) who pointed out that leaders in several sport organisations are often overlapped and dominated by their CEOs in actual leading of the sports. There is also a presumption in non-profit sport organisations that such leadership at the board level often takes a passive role in leading the organisation and gives it as discretion to the executive instead.

Unsurprisingly, almost all the experts stated that indeed, good leadership is important and very impactful for sport organisations. Good leadership can create effectiveness in reaching organisational goals and objectives, as well as other strategic aims. It is also deemed essential and a key requirement for most organisations in all sectors, not only in sport. These opinions extract the finding:

Leadership impacts any organisation, and FAs are no exception. Indeed, FAs (like many sport organisations) tend to grant their leaders a great deal of authority to set policy, increasing the importance of effective leadership. Greater democratic accountability in FAs can reduce the need to identify exceptional leaders, but this also complicates governance. (Assistant professor in sport management at a university in North America)

WHAT MAKES A GOOD SPORT LEADER: LESSONS FROM INDONESIAN FOOTBALL

[Good leadership] creates trust within the organisation and with external partners and stakeholders (e.g., sponsors, public authorities, general public, international governing body). It contributes to a positive image of the organisation and will have a positive effect on people willingness to engage with the sport, either by playing, joining a club, spectating or sponsoring. It is therefore key to the long-term development of the organisation and sport in the country. (Associate professor in sport management at a university in Europe)

Yes, [good leadership is] extremely impactful as an FA's chair and board members provide a direction of what the FA should aim to achieve in the future, and how it will. They should act according to ethical values and be an example for other FA's staffs. (Professor of sport management at a university in Europe)

However, there were also significant opinions that implied leadership really depends on the environment around the organisation, supporting a fact that sport associations are commonly democratic in nature. This view exactly insists that elected leaders are reflections of their voters. Therefore, a good leadership is created when an ecosystem within a sport organisation is already developed, as some experts noted:

A good leadership can foster institutional reform to secure a decent level of good governance. We have to keep in mind, though, that the relationship between leadership and organisation is a reflexive one: Good leadership can induce good governance, but good governance can [also] induce good leadership - in the case of a virtuous cycle. In a vicious cycle, bad leadership can create bad governance as well as bad governance can create bad leadership. The art of politics in an FA is, to a large part, the ability to switch from one cycle to the other. (Senior lecturer in sport politics at a university in Europe);

“A good leadership is one of the most important factors to an FA, but it is not enough. Rules, regulations, management systems and human resources related to sport personnels are also impactful to lead FAs progressively” (Associate professor in sport management at a university in Asia).

7. Discussion

From the findings we have gained insights about what kind of leaders we really need in sport organisations, particularly the ones which are non-profit and constituted of members. While some of those attributes are easily measured and identified, some are difficult to spot on. We deem strategic mindsets, diplomatic skills and integrity are very intrinsic, thus bringing difficulties to trace. However, these intrinsic values are common mentioned in sport leadership studies such as Takos *et al.* (2018) who presented authentic leaders with traits of true-self, fairness and truthful and Billsberry *et al.* (2018, p. 176) who mentioned “integrity” and “vision” as leadership traits. In addition, Ferkins and Shilbury (2012) have emphasised that good sport boards should possess and understand strategic capabilities.

Leaders with certain extent of independence will also be tricky to define, even though it is not that hard to find. To be noted, not all leaders at the board level must be independent, as some should represent their constituents or members. That is why we put ‘to some extent’ as we recommend that independence is not being fully taken as a whole or absolute degree in finding best sport leaders. Increased professionalisation and commercialisation might be the reasons behind why non-profit sport organisations begin to modify its governance system, which is often designed to enhance organisational performance and meet external stakeholders’ needs (Beech, 2013; Booth *et al.*, 2015; Shilbury and Ferkins, 2011; Winand *et al.*, 2010). Some sport NGBs

WHAT MAKES A GOOD SPORT LEADER: LESSONS FROM INDONESIAN FOOTBALL

reportedly adopt a hybrid system onto its boards, where mixed board members are nominated and elected from both members' representatives and independent professionals (Ferkins and Shilbury, 2012; Lang *et al.*, 2018). Governances of football in England and Australia, for instance, have progressed to increase independence at the national board level, as a consequence of "modernisation" (Hoye and Cuskelly, 2007, p. 82). An obvious example about independence can be learned from football organisations in England, where its football NGB and professional leagues have each had an independent chairperson at the board level along with several other independent board members (The Football Association, n.d.; English Football League, n.d.). This emerging trend has been in a state that the board in sport organisations is required to deliver governance skills and an extent of independence which in turn expectedly increase organisational effectiveness (Ferkins and Shilbury, 2012).

The experts in this study were also seemed rejecting one presumption that leaders in non-profit sport organisations must be already rich. This attribute was gathered after opinions arose that it is difficult for sport leaders who work on a voluntary basis, to be devoted serving in the organisation if they are not already rich enough. However, that value has been traded off by other two confirmed attributes, namely 'very senior' and 'successful', implying sport leaders who are already senior and having successful careers will automatically be secured financially.

Nevertheless, the extent of prevalence as to whether volunteer board really works voluntarily in non-profit sport organisations is quite unclear. World football's governing body FIFA, a non-profit body, paid US\$250,000 per person elected in the FIFA Council in 2017, aside from meeting expenses such as travel and accommodation (Panja, 2018). The council, called the executive committee in the past, is equivalent to the board function in major sport NGBs.

Moreover, one of FIFA confederations, the European governing body UEFA, also paid its

WHAT MAKES A GOOD SPORT LEADER: LESSONS FROM INDONESIAN FOOTBALL

president Aleksander Ceferin a US\$1.64 million pre-tax salary while each executive committee member got US\$197,000 in 2017 (Dunbar, 2018). External parties, including the National Council of Nonprofits in the United States, voiced critics to those amounts, inserting argument that a non-profit organisation should not pay board members anything beyond their expenses, or at least a reliable justification should be available (Panja, 2018). FIFA's salary payments to its council in 2017 were not considered sensible as similar roles in private for-profit sector have been paid less than those amounts (Panja, 2018).

Experienced in the sport is also confirmed to be an important attribute for sport leaders. We decided to test the attribute as it has been a requirement for leaders at the PSSI, which states in its statutes that members of the board, including the chairperson, should have been involved in football for at least five years. This study has confirmed that sport leaders must have a basic understanding about the specificity of sport in order to be impactful for the organisation, as in line with a suggestion highlighted by Hoye and Cuskelly (2007).

Meanwhile, far from politics, which obligates leaders of sport NGBs to not hold top positions in any governmental institutions and/ or not act as politicians, is considered to minimise conflicts of interest between politics and sport. In our view, since sport NGBs often receive funding from the state, sport leaders should act accordingly to promote their sports without risking abusing the public money. This attribute is also to address prevalence of using sport as a vehicle to get political acceptance and legitimacy. By ensuring sport leaders are far from politics, things might be better as they would work sincerely for the development of the sports, instead of pushing hidden agenda of themselves in relation to political campaign.

Some findings of this study are also coherent with sport leader attributes suggested by the Australian Sports Commission as presented in Hoye and Cuskelly (2007), who outline board member skills and competencies of non-profit sport organisations such as “understanding and experience in the sport, independence and inquisitiveness, broad business experience, ability to think strategically, ability to understand and relate to stakeholders, financial analysis skills and a high level of personal integrity” (p. 79). Thus, we consider five confirmed attributes about integrity, independence, strategic thinking, being diplomatic and experience in the sport found in this study are in line with the ASC recommendation, while the other attributes are relatively new.

8. Conclusion

This study concludes that ideal sport leaders must be very senior, successful in career, independent to some extent, good in diplomacy, far from politics, experienced in the sport, possessing strategic mindsets and having a proven track-record of integrity.

Those leadership attributes are important because governing and managing a sport require complex structures, decisions and processes (Amara *et al.*, 2005). Such leaders will create effectiveness in dealing with those complexities. In addition, best-suited leaders of a sport organisation contribute to trust and reputation, which can attract external stakeholders to support the development of the sport. Good leaders will also bring significance in helping the organisation to swiftly respond to crises or uncertainties. When a sport organisation has good leaders at the top, it will also become more strategic, reliable and resilient at achieving its goals and objectives.

Good leadership is believed very critical for sport organisations. Evidences from this study must be kept in the minds of sports people who might so far have quested for finding reasons

WHAT MAKES A GOOD SPORT LEADER: LESSONS FROM INDONESIAN FOOTBALL

why some sport organisations fail while others achieve, in related to organisational performance. Nevertheless, good leadership is not as easy as it is stated. Determinants of good leadership are actually depended on how consistent an organisation applies good governance principles. At a point, since non-profit sport organisations elect and appoint its leaders in democratic manner, we might call that good members will create good leadership.

We suggest and propose this study to be adapted and followed up by other researchers, as somehow we hope that framework of sport leader attributes could be inserted as national sport policy, in order to shape sport federations to be able performing effectively over time. We also note that some leadership attributes found in this study are not easy to define. So, we suggest future researches can go in-depth about these attributes and construct well-defined measures to make it easy for people to identify ideal sport leaders. Limitations of the study were, first, we only utilised online questionnaire rather than interviews. It is apparent that interview can get more vast and in-depth data. However, we opted for online questionnaire due to financial, geographical and time constraints. Second, this study assumes that the benchmarked sport organisation in context is the one who is placed in an already developed environment, neglecting the fact that Indonesia's sport industry is still in early developing phase. It would be more appropriate if the study fitted with governance models that work best for sport organisations in developing countries, so that the findings might be different.

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WHAT MAKES A GOOD SPORT LEADER: LESSONS FROM INDONESIAN FOOTBALL

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