

Malay Business Leaders' Characteristics and Their Success in Business

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ABSTRACT

This research is mainly focusing on the profile of successful Malay business leader in Malaysia. The major objectives were to study their characteristic that contributed to the successful in the business. The data for this research were collected from two sources, namely primary sources and secondary sources. The qualitative in-depth interview research technique was used for the primary data. A total of ten (10) successful Malay business leaders around Kedah and Perlis state were selected as respondents of this research. As for secondary data, five (5) successful Malay business leaders were analyzed based on the existing books and other sources documented their success. Based on the analysis, these leaders exhibit a vision in their life, intelligence, inspiring and compassionate. Besides, they are also very decisive, hardworking and committed in their work. These characteristic have proven to be key ingredients in their success and these traits are also present among successful business leaders of other ethnic groups.

Keywords: Malay, business leader, successful

INTRODUCTION

Business leader are considered as important asset in organization or company. The leaders are by far one of the key factors which can drive a business to either success or failure. In fact, a leader is a person who influences to direct and coordinate the activities of the members of

an organized group toward the accomplishment of group objectives (Valdiserri & Wilson, 2010). Mosadegh and Yarmohammadian (2006) also argue that a leader must be able to influence their followers to achieve greater performance, their superiors and peers to make important decisions; and stakeholders to ensure the vitality of the organization.

Leading change is a basic part of the organizations lives and policy process. It is the leader responsibility to lead change in the organizations. As mentioned by Daft (2005), the strong and committed leader is very crucial to the successful changes. Browne (2005) explained that leader must predict forces that will cause change, identify opportunities that will require changes, react to unforeseen events that make changes urgent, and work with others to overcome the expected reactions to change.

Nowadays, many factors include leadership include leadership characteristics of the business leader have contributed to the success of business leader in Malaysia and all over the world. It is often argued that the success or failure of an organization is hinges on the leadership characteristics of a leader.

The subject of leadership has received increasing attention by many academics, scholars and researchers over the last decades. Indeed, no other role in organization has received more interest than the leader (Schwandt & Marquardt, 2000). The positive characteristic of leaders is a necessity to succeeding (Dearlove, 2002). According to Valdiserri and Wilson (2010), the way in which a leader acts, behaves and guides their followers is a crucial factor to organization success. There are certain distinct characteristics which a leader of a business uses to influence their success in business. The personal characteristics may include self-awareness, decisiveness, fairness, enthusiasm, integrity, knowledge, creativity and imagination, endurance, motivation and so on.

Leaders of today face new challenges including communicating and interacting across regional, national, ethnic, cultural, language, and legal boundaries; dealing with and implementing continual change; coping with increase ambiguity; negotiating and resolving conflict; motivating a multi-cultural workforce; and in some cases managing a foreign assignment and living as an expatriate (Sheridan, 2005). This is among the greatest challenge facing leaders in the era of globalization. It may be a small world, but are worlds apart? Increasing globalization has created complexity for those leading and managing organizations.

BUSINESS LEADER CHARACTERISTICS

Leader characteristic can be defined as the energetic and organized set of personality of a person that uniquely influences his or her cognitions, motivation and behavior. According to Yusuf (1995) personal characteristics and traits have been suggested to affect the leader success. This is also supported by Wagner (2006), who found that those individual characteristics tend to play a major role in explaining business leader success.

A Sense of Urgency

According to Marvin Bower (1997), to develop a leader in business, the leader must have the sense of urgency. One of the ways currently advocated for improving the command system is to use time (that is speed, speed) to provide a competitive edge. He also observed that many outstanding companies had a sense of urgency underlying everything they did.

According to Stuart Crainer (2002), the successful business leader like Rupert Murdoch is always giving attention in moving fast in the work to seize the opportunity. He noted that every decision must be quick and to embrace with a new technology is also very significant because moving fast affect all aspects of the business.

Honesty and Integrity

Research by William (2008) has identified one of the key success factors for business leader is by practicing integrity in their leadership in the organization. Wood and Vilkinas (2007) reported that business leaders and staff consistently rated integrity as one of the key requirements of successful leadership.

According to Barbee (2008), she identified that business leaders with high ethical standards and professionalism inspire those traits in all employees. And employees who embody those principles are respected for their character, reputation and professionalism.

Knowing Yourself and Self Development

According to Barbee (2008), for business leader is a must to know yourself first as the key to inspire others to follow you. A leader

who is frank about his or her strengths and weaknesses can surround him or herself with people whose strengths are complementary. A business leaders need to cultivate in order to improve the current economic climate and make the world a better place to live and work by knowing yourself about your beliefs, values, priorities and purpose for living (Schwerin, 2012).

Self Confidence

Self-belief is important when you are right about something and you take a stand on the issue — even if it is unpopular which may require strength of character (Laabs, 1999). However, overconfidence worked against Land who was forced out of Polaroid (Fenster, 2000). Land, a clever scientist harnessed creativity, but lacked self-assessment. He did not recognise his resistance to change, lack of vision and did not acknowledge the business world was changing. Self-assessment is critical for effective leadership (Leider, 1996).

Intelligence

Goleman (2004) states that rather than being just a nice, emotional intelligence is a must have for successful business leaders. Researchers such as Wood and Vilkinas (2007), Sparks and Gentry (2008) have similarly found that emotional intelligence skills featured as a key characteristic of successful leaders. Research by Goleman (2004) indicates that for leaders, emotional intelligence was twice as important as the technical or cognitive skills, and the relative importance of emotional intelligence increases with seniority of the leadership position.

Coutu (2004) states that leaders with high emotional intelligence were better team players and are more effective at motivating themselves and those surrounding them. A leader with high emotional intelligence will recognise the fear within the organisation, acknowledge it, and provide a vision and strategy for the future.

Visionary

Transformational leaders operate strategically, guiding organisational vision and providing adequate resources. Leaders such as J Paul Getty, though having an open door policy and being accessible to

his employees, believed their loyalty should be to each other and to shareholders (Fenster, 2000).

Lee Iacoca according to William (2008) had developed a vision for the future Chrysler. He was proclaimed as a visionary who could see far beyond the day to day activities of business. He used to think differently from others and always come-up with innovative idea. Great leaders have a vision and utmost faith in themselves to fulfil that vision. He said among the great business leader such as Ken Chenault (American Express CEO) knew what they wanted to accomplish, visualized its outcome, and devoted all their energies and emotions to accomplishing that mission (Murphy, 2009).

William (2008) based on his research that a visionary business leader always listened to others ideas, and watched what other competitors did and took best from all of them to make a success for their business. William (2008) based on his research also cited that a visionary business leader besides had the ability to communicate the vision itself it must be also mixed with the confidence because will determine the success of everything dreamed.

Committed

William (2008) had found that commitment was among the qualities that the business leader should embrace. Fernandez (2006) also stated that committed in business was an essential qualities need for business leader to succeed in China. According to Murphy (2006), the business leader or great leader must focus their effort with full commitment to reach the goals.

Motivate

Gardner (1989) found that business leaders should have the capacity to move people to action, to communicate persuasively, to strengthen the confidence of the followers to develop leaders in business. This was supported by Micek (2008) that she concluded motivate is a sincere desire to understand and help people.

Humility

According to Fernandez (2006), business leaders are advised to be humble and avoid using authoritarian style to succeed in the business. Whereas Bower (1997) has outlined several unassuming behaviour

that should be avoided for business leader likes arrogance, haughtiness and egoism because they are poisonous to leadership.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research design employed in this research was qualitative method in order to have a deeper and better understanding of how the Malay business leaders become successful. Besides, in term of collecting data, researcher used interview and secondary data technique. The survey questionnaire was designed and used in the face-to-face interview to enquiry the business leader characteristics that contributed to the successful in the business and government support towards the successful of Malays business leaders. After the researcher collects the data, the researcher will process and analyze the data to get the result or finding for this research.

Population and Sampling

The overview of this study is mainly focusing on the profile of successful Malay business leader in Malaysia. Therefore, the populations cover all business leader or manager around Kedah and Perlis state. For this study, 10 respondents were selected from different company around the state of Kedah and Perlis for the interview process. A respondent selection criterion is made up of successful Malay business leader whereas the information that collected in the final can answer the research objective. The list of ten (10) respondents that selected as Table 1 below:

Table 1

Sample of the Research

Respondent No.	Position	Company Name
1	Manager	Era Edar MarketingSdn. Bhd
2	Manager	ZatikimiaSdn. Bhd
3	Manager	Saujana Tax and Account Service

(continued)

Respondent No.	Position	Company Name
4	Manager	Saudagar AMS IndustriSdn.Bhd
5	Manager	Syarikat Inang Sari
6	Manager	SalunN'Murnidan HR centre
7	Manager	Tia Maju Enterprise
8	Manager	Celcom Centre
9	Manager	Sweet Alamanda
10	Manager	AiniKaleena Enterprise

Research Instrument

In term of research instrument, researcher used structured interview session. Respondents are free to answer the questions as appropriate. In this research, interview generally contains two main sections.

First section is intended to gather information on respondent demographic such as type of business, business location, education level and experience. Awards and positions held also will ask in this section.

The second section of interview was to find out the characteristic of business leaders which are become the keys success in business area. The questions as follow:

- 1) What are the characteristics of the successful of Malay business leader? And whether these characteristic contribute to success?

Data Collection

1. Primary Data

Primary data is a type of information that is obtained directly from first-hand sources by means of surveys, observation or experimentation. It is data that has not been previously published and is derived from a new or original research study and collected at the source. Thus, the primary data are the data collected direct from the respondents to answer the research problem.

In this study, primary data obtained through the interview of respondent. Researcher used the questionnaire to conduct interview of ten business leader selected. Interview is a personally engagement between two people, where one asking the questions and in the other hands, are answering them.

2. Secondary Data

The secondary data is the data that is collected and examine by the previous researchers. Secondary data for a research can be obtained through several sources of literature ever published or unpublished. This type of data is generally taken from newspaper, magazines, bulletins, reports, databases or journals. The information obtained from this source is very useful and important to researcher to support and strengthen the primary data.

In term of this research, secondary data obtained from library Sultanah Bahiyah Universiti Utara Malaysia such as books, magazines and academic exercises. Besides, business company profile such as Microsoft, Virgin, Maybank and Air Asia was also used as a reference in the process to complete this research. In addition, individual successful leaders were also researched using Internet. These researches were conducting using the Google search engine. Listed below are the names of the Malay business leaders based on the secondary data:

- i) Dato Seri Abdul Wahid Omar – Maybank
- ii) Tan Sri DatoAzmanHashim – Ambank
- iii) Tan Sri Syed Mokhtar Syed Al – Bukhary
- iv) Dato Seri ShazallyRamly - Celcom
- v) DatoSeriNazirTunRazak – CIMB

FINDINGS

In order to collect data, in-depth interview research technique was done to ten (10) successful Malay business leaders. The analysis of demographic was carried out to explain the background of the respondent in term of type of business, location of business, education level, experience, awards and positions held by the respondents.

Profile of Malay Business Leader (Interview)

1. Types of Business

The result from the interviews found that all the respondents have their own companies. The business type was divided into various

categories such as manufacturing, communication, services/trading, clothing, health/beauty products, food and others.

2. Business Location

The interview was conducted around Kedah and Perlis state. Based on the interview results, most of respondents have their business location in Kedah state. From the results, eight (8) of respondents have a distribution of business location in Kedah state like Sungai Petani, AlorSetar, Jitra, and Changlun. While the remaining two (2) respondents doing business in Kangar, Perlis.

3. Education Level

Levels of education held by the respondents are categorized into six levels which are SPM, Certificate, Diploma, STPM, Degree and Masters. According to the interviews, three (3) of respondent were SPM holders and one (1) of respondent are Certificate, Diploma and STPM holders. It is positively good remark as all the Malay respondents have completed their secondary school studies. Furthermore, education level for Degree and Master indicates two (2) respondents respectively. All Malay business leaders are reported have completed their studies with minimum secondary school studies.

4. The Experience

In term of experience, researcher divided respondent experience period into three categories between 1 to 5 years, 6 to 10 years and 11 to 15 years. Total of five (5) respondents had an experience period between 1 to 5 years, one (1) of respondent had an experience period between 6 to 10 years and lastly about four (4) respondents had 11 to 15 years of experience.

5. Awards

Awards are often signified by the trophies, titles, certificates, commemorative plaques, medals, badges, pins, or ribbons. Results on the table show that most of the Malay business leaders are an award recipient in the field of business. Based on the results, they got an awards based on their excellent achievement in business area. Table 2 indicated the awards received by respondents.

Table 2

The Awards Received by Respondents

Respondents	Awards
1	‘UsahawanTani Jaya’, Successful Entrepreneur (AURA) Kedah state level and listed in the “ <i>Inspiring Women</i> ” in the magazine of FEM (<i>Federation of Woman Malaysia</i>)
2	Successful Women Entrepreneurs in Perlis state level.
3	-
4	Excellence Entrepreneur in conjunction with Rural Entrepreneur Carnival (KUD) North Zone.
5	‘Usahawan Harapan’
6	<i>Diamond Director</i>
7	-
8	<i>Executive Partner</i>
9	-
10	-

6. Position Held

Position held by respondents was the last question in the demographic profile. Out of ten (10) respondents, three (3) of respondents were actively involves in the association and held various positions while the remaining seven (7) respondents was the manager on the company that has been cultivated by them.

Profile of Malay Business Leader (Secondary Data)

It was recognized that interviews with the ten (10) Malay business leader themselves did not enough and therefore interview data was compared (where possible) with information from annual reports and other company’s publications, regulatory authorities, magazine and newspaper articles to support the validity of the findings in this research.

1. Dato Seri Abdul Wahid Omar

Dato Seri Abdul Wahid Omar is the President and CEO of Maybank, Malaysia’s largest banking group, a position he has held since May

2008. He is a Fellow of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (United Kingdom) and a Member of the Malaysian Institute of Accountants. Prior to joining Maybank, he was Group Chief Executive Officer of Telekom Malaysia Berhad from July 2004 until its demerger with Axiata Group Berhad in April 2008. He was formerly Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer of UEM Group Berhad as well as Executive Vice Chairman of PLUS Expressways Berhad.

2. Tan Sri DatoAzman Hashim

Tan Sri Dato Seri AzmanHashim has been an Executive Chairman at AmcorpGroupBerhad (formerly, Arab-Malaysian Group) since 1993. As a corporate leader, Tan Sri Dato Seri AzmanHashim sits on the boards of various groups and organizations where he is the Chairman. Among the group of where he was chairman are several subsidiaries of the AmBank Group, Amcorp Properties Berhad, AMMB Holdings Berhad Group, Arab-Malaysian Corporation Berhad Group, Arab-Malaysian Finance Berhad, Arab-Malaysian Property Trust Management Berhad, Arab-Malaysian Development Berhad Group and RedifussionBerhad Group. He is also the Chairman of South Peninsular Industries Berhad, Pembangunan MasMelayuBerhad, Malaysian South Corporation Berhad and MIMOS Berhad.

3. Tan Sri Syed Mokhtar Al-Bukhary

Tan Sri Syed Mokhtar Al-Bukhary is the richest Malay corporate figure in Malaysia. He was born in AlorSetar, Kedah in 1951 at middle class family. His family hailed from Hadhramaut, Yemen. Tan Sri Syed Mokhtar Al-Bukhary highest education was only until form five, and he never went to university. But that doesn't mean he's lacked of knowledge. A whole lot of his knowledge and experience was gained through his own entrepreneurship experience during his youth time. He started working when he was studying where he helped in the planting of vegetables and selling them in the market while he learnt book keeping through assisting his father.

4. Dato Sri Shazalli Ramly

Dato Sri Shazalli bin Ramly was appointed as Chief Executive Officer and Director of CelcomAxiataBerhad (Celcom) on 1 September 2005.

He graduated from Universiti Teknologi MARA Perlis in 1982. He holds a Bachelor's of Science in Marketing from Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana and a Master's of Business Administration from St. Louis University, Missouri, USA. Dato Sri Shazalli Ramly is currently the director for several companies which include Celcom Axiata Berhad [formerly known as Celcom (Malaysia) Berhad], C-Mobile Sdn Bhd, Celcom Mobile Sdn Bhd and Technology Resources Industries Berhad. He has more than 18 years of experience in the field of marketing, having worked with a number of major fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) companies both at home and abroad.

5. Dato' Sri Nazir Razak

Dato' Sri Nazir Razak is the Group Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer of CIMB Group, and Deputy Chairman of CIMB Bank, CIMB Investment Bank and President Commissioner of PT Bank CIMB Niaga Tbk. Dato' Sri Nazir Razak holds a Bachelor's of Science in Economic and Politic from University of Bristol and a Master of Philosophy in Development Economic from the University of Cambridge. Under his leadership, CIMB established itself as the undisputed leader in Malaysian investment banking by the early 2000. Then he led CIMB through a remarkable transformation into a regional universal bank via a series of acquisitions – G.K. Goh Securities of Singapore and Bumiputra-Commerce Bank in 2005, Southern Bank in 2006, Bank Niaga of Indonesia in 2007, Bank Lippo of Indonesia and Bank Thai of Thailand in 2008.

Dato' Sri Nazir Razak is a member of the Investment Panel and Chairman of the Investment Panel Risk Committee of the Employees Provident Fund. He also a Chairman of the World Islamic Economic Forum (WIEF) Young Leaders Network, and the prime mover behind the establishment of the ASEAN Business Club, a private-sector driven initiative for ASEAN's major corporations to support ASEAN integration. He holds directorships in various CIMB Group companies, Malaysian Electronic Payment System (1997) Sdn Bhd and is an Executive Committee member of the Malaysia International Islamic Financial Centre. He is Trustee of the Rahah Foundation and the Pride Foundation.

Data Analysis

The results of this research shows that a common leadership characteristics shared by all successful leaders. Malays business leader have shown their capabilities in leading the organization crossing the region. Based on the secondary data collected, it was found that most of successful Malay business leaders have the visionary, intelligence, confident and courage, inspiring and humility and decisiveness characteristics.

It is clearly show that most Malaysian successful business leaders in the secondary data have a vision in their personality include Dato Seri Abdul Wahid Omar. In conversation with Malaysian Business on Jun 16, 2010, it is truly confirmed that Dato Seri Abdul Wahid Omar was a visionary person. This was supported by the evidence of successful Telekom Malaysia (TM). In 2008, TM was able to complete their three major acquisitions, which have significantly grown their operations and presence in Southand Southeast Asia. In addition, Dato' Sri Nazir Razak also has a higher degree for this character. For example, Dato' Sri Nazir Razak was named as the "Visionaries and Leaders Series" honoree for Southeast Asia. This award is designed to honor individuals and institutions from around the globe that are widely recognized for articulating a clear vision and demonstrating outstanding leadership in their given fields.

Another element found related to the Malay business leader success is intelligence character. Based on the profile analysis, it clearly shows that most of the Malay business leaders except Tan Sri Syed Mokhtar Al-Bukhary are intelligent in the education level. Dato Sri Shazalli Ramly for example holds a Bachelor's of Science in Marketing from Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana and a Master's of Business Administration from St. Louis University, Missouri, USA.

In addition, Dato' Sri Nazir Razak also holds a Bachelor's of Science in Economic and Politic from University of Bristol and a Master of Philosophy in Development Economic from the University of Cambridge. Their intelligence in the education level makes them more reputable and brings customer confidence in dealing with their service. However, according to our analysis, Tan Sri Syed Mokhtar Al-Bukhary score low for this elements. It is because Tan Sri Syed Mokhtar Al-Bukhary highest education was only until form five, and he never went to university.

Also, many of Malay business leader show a high level of confidence and courage. For example, the confident and courage of Dato Sri Shazalli Ramly can see clearly when he got involved with NTV7 during the economic downturn seven (7) years ago. During the economic downturn, Dato Sri Shazalli Ramly was able to bring NTV7 into a pioneering broadcast station with digital capabilities, successfully using the “feel good channel” tag. In addition, Tan Sri Syed Mokhtar Al-Bukhary also shows a confident and courage characters. For example in the mid-1980s, his mega business project was interrupted by the global economic crisis and he incurred high loss as a result of it. However, this business failure does not affect his spirit to be a successful entrepreneur. He adapted the situation without any fear. He aims is to strengthen and expand his business all around the world. Any failure and business losses that he faced make him become more confident and courage in handling the business activities and careful to make any future decision. For instance, his family business cattle give him beneficial experience in conducting the business because from that he dares to change his business areas from farm animals to a grocery shop. Then, he diversified his business more too many areas such as transportations and logistic, cloth, rice, sugar and so on.

Inspiring and humility was another characteristic found in Malay business leader profile that contributed to the successful in the business. This element of characteristic also gives a higher point to Tan Sri Syed Mokhtar Al-Bukhary. His inspiring and humility characteristics prove from his charity foundation under the name of Al-Bukhary Foundation. Al-Bukhary Foundation helped to build Islamic Art Museum valued at RM70 millions as well as building many mosques and charity establishments in Kedah, Perak and across the country. The foundation also finances English, Science and Mathematics classes for more than 20,000 underachieving students every year, as well as running a college scholarship program for 300 students in more than 40 countries. Other than that, he also has donated a lot of his profit toward orphan and people who needed help. He also has donated 1.25 Million Pound to Oxford Islamic Institute for research on Islam and gives scholarship to 1000 Saudi Arabian student to study in Malaysia. Another inspiring and humility person is Dato Seri Abdul Wahid Omar. Based on the interview in Business Magazine, Dato Seri Abdul Wahid Omar was classified as a prudent and down to earth person.

The last characteristic found in the profile of Malay business leader based on the secondary data is decisiveness. According to the analysis, Tan Sri Syed Mokhtar Al-Bukhary is a leader who is decisiveness. It is shown when he does a meeting with his entire top manager to maintain the quality and to guide them from any mistake that maybe taken. This example make him became a decisiveness leader. Another example in decisiveness characters is from Dato Seri Abdul Wahid Omar. Some of the executives who have worked with, describe him as analytical and decisive. His typical working day starts at 8am and could end late into the evening. In his first year alone, he held 24 boards of meetings.

Committed and passion, integrity, capability and adaptability, networking and collaborative, urgency and motivate show the lowest character posses by our business leader. These finding however is based on the limited publication and sources that researcher feel the insufficient information could not be justified the absent of the characters.

Meanwhile, the data analysis of the interview on ten (10) successful Malay business leaders in Kedah and Perlis, encountered three (3) elements of characteristic that related to the business success. Those elements are hardworking, commitment and confident. Almost 80 percent of respondents agreed that characteristic of hardworking, commitment and confidence contributed to their business success, while the remaining 20 percent of respondents choose risk-taking and ability to make decision character as the factor that contributed to their success. In the case of respondent five (5), under the hardworking, confident and commitment characters, she was able to establish Inang Suri Company that produces the HAZLEEN Chocolate brands. She started the business without formal intentions to commercialize it until started to be more serious since the last few years as the business grow is positive. Her first venture started with introducing "Homemade" chocolate. After that, from the Rand D unit, she was able to introduce the Tropical Flavors Chocolate. The uniqueness of the tastes and its differences make the demands of her chocolate became appealing. The results for the growing demand shows that the annual sale of her company turnover from RM10, 000 to less than RM20, 000 with the total of the (10) skilled and unskilled employees from disable people, which makes her company stand strong among its competitors.

Meanwhile, in the case of respondents nine (9), the hardworking, confident and commitment characters make her able to create a stable company that produces a chocolate product. She starts involved in business area since she was thirteen (13) years old. After school, she would help her father take care of their ice cream shops. Aside from her father's business, she also helped her auntie in the restaurants. Before she owned the company, she produces her own products at home. Drove by the confident and coupled with his experience and support from the family, she bring himself to one step further with established her own company and factory. Her hardworking, confident and commitment inspires her more to become a successful entrepreneur with her own skills and interest. Even though she is from the family which was a business minded type of person, but she proves she was able to stand up with her own choice and she made it.

The summary of Malay business leader characteristic of the interview on ten (10) successful Malay business leaders and summary of Malay business leader characteristic using secondary data has been summarized in Table 3 and Table 4 below:

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The data for this research were collected from two sources, namely primary sources and secondary sources. Primary data were obtained through face-to-face interview with ten (10) successful Malay business leaders in Kedah and Perlis. As for secondary data, five (5) successful Malay business leaders was highlight. By combining the use of both data, the research teams were able to have an in-depth understanding of the profile of Malay business leader being investigated.

In general, the results from found that leader characteristic are the factors that contributed to the success of Malay business leaders. The elements such as visionary, intelengence, confident and courage and decisiveness also related to the success of Malay business leaders in Malaysia.

The results of this research shows that a common leader characteristics shared by all successful leaders. It was concluded that there are many different characters that successful leaders posses. However, the research revealed that the successful business leaders share many of the same characteristics. Based on the results, several characteristics that contributed to the Malay business leader success was identified. These characteristic are listed as follows:

Table 3
Summary of Malay Business Leader Characteristic (Interview)

Business Leader	Hardworking	Confident	Commitment	Risk-Taking	Ability to Make Decision
1	/	/	/		
2	/	/	/		
3	/	/	/		
4				/	/
5	/	/	/		
6	/	/	/		
7	/	/	/		
8	/	/	/		
9	/	/	/		
10				/	/

Table 4

Summary of Malay Business Leader Characteristic (Secondary Data)

Name of Business Leader	Visionary	Intelligence	Confidence & Courage	Committed & Passion	Integrity	Inspiring & Humility	Capability & Adaptability	Decisiveness	Networking & Collaborative	Urgency	Motivate
Dato Seri Abd. Wahid Omar (<i>Malaysian Business</i>)	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
Tan Sri DatoAzmanHashim (<i>mapsworld.com</i>)	/	/					/				
Dato Seri ShazalliRamly (<i>The Star</i> , <i>www.frost.com</i>)	/	/	/	/	/			/		/	
Dato' Sri Nazir Razak (<i>CIMB Press Release</i> , <i>findarticle.com</i>)	/	/	/			/	/	/			
Tan Sri Syed Mokhtar Al- Bukhary (<i>The Star</i> , <i>Malaysian Business</i>)	/		/		/	/		/	/		

1) *Visionary*

Vision is the primary and most important quality for business leader to possess. It is what leads and motivates him towards success. Visionary refers to the category of intentions that are broad, all-inclusive and forward thinking. It describes aspirations for the future, without specifying the means that will be used to achieve those desired ends.

Successful leaders must have a vision for the workplace and the community that ultimately results in a significant improvement of the organizational culture. Obviously, the leader who has a vision is needed not only to bring the organization successfully but also to highlight the country image throughout the world (Adeyemi, 2010). Recent research by William (2008) showed that Sam Walton, the founder of Wal Mart was able to communicate his vision to employees and suppliers alike and in the end his vision came to reality and made Wal Mart a success.

2) *Intelligence*

Intelligence is critical to business leader success as it offers the “know how” to launch and grow a new venture, growth goals are equally important as they provide the motivation by focusing the “know how” on specific outcomes. Intelligence is an umbrella term used to describe a property of the mind that encompasses many related abilities such as the capacities to reason, to plan, to solve problems, to think abstractly, to comprehend the ideas, to use language and to learn. In some cases, intelligence may include traits such as creativity, personality, character, knowledge, or wisdom.

Sternberg (2004) suggested that intelligence may be a powerful ability concept predictor of business leader performance. According to Wagner (2000) successful business leader requires a blend of analytical, creative, and practical aspects of intelligence, which, in combination, constitute successful intelligence. Researcher by Wood and Vilkinas (2007), Sparks and Gentry (2008) have similarly found that emotional intelligence skills featured as a key characteristic of successful leaders.

3) *Confident and Courage*

Confident and courage is the most identifiable outward trait. Leader at various levels of organizations seems to share a respect for the abilities

of their colleagues, and the belief that they enjoy the confidence of their superior. This atmosphere is infectious. Self-confidence is critical decisiveness, for without it, a businessman loses his challenging situations. Those who portray a lack of self-confidence in their ability to complete assignments give signs to their subordinates, peers and superiors that these duties are beyond their capabilities. Previous research by Schwerin (2012); Fenster (2000) reveals that characteristics of confidence and courage play an important role in the success of business leaders like Ingvar Kamprad (IKEA), Thomas Watson (IBM) and Estée Lauder (Estée Lauder cosmetics).

4) *Inspiring and Humility*

The ability to inspire people to reach great heights of success is a key ingredient of a successful entrepreneur. Inspiration enthuses and ignites greatness. Meanwhile, humility is having a modest opinion or estimate of one's own importance or rank. It's about being open to the possibility of improvement. As a role model, the leader will be a person who serves as an example of a positive behavior. What level the leaders aspire to, all eyes are on them. A business leader must practice what they preach, set the standard, walk the talk, share their experience and work to show others the way to look.

When the leader inspires and practices humility, they will gain the respect of others. Respect brings with it a number of rewards such as more satisfying relationships, broader influence, and a number of employment-related benefits like raises, promotions, and increased sales. According to Fernandez (2006), if the leader's actions create a legacy that inspires others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, they will be a successful leader. Meanwhile, research by McClelland (1965) also showed that humility was higher in the success of entrepreneurs. Stewart and Roth (2004) also argue that inspiring and humility was positively related to success.

5) *Decisiveness*

The ability to make decisions, sometimes quickly, is a key component of the entrepreneurial personality. This willingness to make, and hold to, a decision is a necessary leadership skill. The awareness that there

may be better decisions at any choice point does not result in the indecisiveness that other people often demonstrate. Making the right decision at the right time has always proved to be an elusive prospect. While it is possible to do so, as a leader they need to make incorrect decision. Many of these decisions will have a little or no effect on the organization as whole, but if the leaders are fortunate enough to reach upper levels of management, the decision people made will affect an individual, a group, or the entire of organization.

Aldrich and Zimmer (1986) mention that decisiveness characters is the higher need for the success of business leader. In developing a model for determinants of successful entrepreneurship based on Dutch entrepreneurs, Van Praag (1996) proposed that decisiveness characters play a big role to become the successful leaders. Iyer and Schoar (2007) also argue that decisiveness play a significant role in determining success once the business starts operations.

6) *Hardworking*

One of the most important aspects of business success is hardworking. The most famous successful business leaders in this world are become after very hard work. The many business leaders become more reach after very hard work. According to Lee (1997), there is no substitute of hard work, the business leader got to work hard to succeed. Low and McMillan (1988) also argued that hardworking help to develop a theory of entrepreneurship success. In their research, it was found that factor like hardworking lead to entrepreneurial success.

7) *Commitment*

Another important aspect in business success is commitment. Some experts define commitment as both a willingness to persist in a course of action and reluctance to change plans, often owing to a sense of obligation to stay the course. When the leaders focus all their time and effort on the right areas they are going to find themselves making more progress and feeling better about the direction that are headed. According to Fernandez (2008), commitment unlocks the doors of imagination, allows vision, and gives the leaders the 'right stuff' to turn our dreams into reality. Desire is the key to motivation, but its determination and commitment to an unrelenting pursuit of the goal -

a commitment to excellence - that will enable the leaders to attain the success them seek.

Recent research by William (2008) shows that commitment was among the qualities the business leader should embrace. According to Murphy (2006), the business leader or great leader must focus their effort with full commitment to reach the goals.

Results in this research constitute only an early step in understanding the profile of successful Malay business leader in Malaysia. As mentioned, profiles of successful Malay business leaders from the respective communities arguably help to bridge the perceived gap between academia and managerial practice. In addition, stories from successful Malay business leader can be shared at the national level and can be further disseminated to other regions.

However, in order to overcome the limitations of data gathering, additional research is needed to observe the leader characteristic towards Malay business success. Hence, it would be beneficial for future research to consider the following recommendation:

- i. It is recommended that future research may also include the testing of other variables which might have significant effects on Malay business success.
- ii. The study samples only focus on the Malay business leader. Hence, future research is recommended to expand the scope of the research to the different ethnic such as Chinese and India. The results might be different if it is conduct based on particular ethnic composition of the communities. In addition a greater number of participants is also recommended as with most studies, the more sample participate, the more reliable and strong the conclusions.
- iii. It is recommended that further research may include more about leadership characteristics of business leader and succession plan towards sustaining in the business.
- iv. To many Malays, the West provides the inspiration and a model to follow. For the Malays to be equally successful as the Chinese entrepreneurial development program for Malays must be spelt out in a master plan and definitely they need guidance and leadership in business especially in marketing from professionals, not merely accepting everything from the West. Therefore, Shukor (2006) suggested that values and attitudes, entrepreneurial skills, managerial skills and

entrepreneurial characteristics are required and important for business success. This case history also offers opportunities for future research. Research could be carried out to identify the training requirements and succession plan of Malay-owned firms to produce more business leader in Malaysia.

CONCLUSION

From the findings, it could be concluded that the entire objective was achieved. The results have shown that leadership characteristics are related to the success of Malay business leaders. Finding of this research can also help the Malay business leaders to learn how to utilize their learning characteristics in order to increase their future performance. Although this research has its own limitations, it has contributed in making the findings to see whether such variables influence the other. However, more research should be conducted in the future in order to gain a whole understanding a profile of successful Malay business leader in Malaysia.

By having only certain Malays corporate figure successful in their field, the findings also showed to us that to be a great or famous leader consumed a large amount of times to spend for their prosperity. In this case, committed and passion would be a key for the successful business leaders. The lessons behind that are for being a successful business leader need a long process and consume a lot of time. For researcher, a long time periods used to prosper in business meaning business people was a truly successful business leader. They might be started from below or experienced with win or lose to before become a success business leader. This is important to discard the negative perception about the Malays who are generally regarded as a government-subsidized community.

According to Mahdzan (2004), the image of the corporate Malay is that he got there through some government patronage under the NEP, even though this may be little those who made it to the pinnacle of an organization with their own effort. There appears to be a close relationship between business and politics in Malaysia. To be successful in big business, one has to have a political patronage. According to Gomez and Jomo (1997), since 1980s, the government policies tended to assist larger businesses rather than the smaller companies. Larger, politically well-connected enterprises have enjoyed better access to tenders. The size of the business and

political influence interact as part of the new Malay idiom of power in contemporary Malaysia.

Due to having only business leader or corporate figure especially among Malays, the government is recommend to find more effective way to encourage Malays business person to venture into business. Some of the existing literature (e.g. Small Medium Industry Development Corporation (SMIDEC), 2002; Saleh & Ndubisi, 2006) highlighted many challenges facing the SMEs, such as the lack of financing, low productivity, lack of managerial capabilities, lack of access to management and technology as well as heavy regulatory burden.

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