

## **Factors that Influence Woman–Leader Identity Conflict among Indonesian Women Leaders**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Men are sometimes treated as higher than women, and men's qualities are also sometimes promoted as being superior to those of women. This stereotype can be assumed to affect how women view themselves when they assume a leadership role. This study aims to investigate the role of gender identity, importance of identity and patriarchal belief on identity conflict on women leaders. An online survey was conducted in two stages to reduce common method bias, with the final stage involving 163 women leaders. The reliability of the instruments ranged from 0.81 to 0.89, indicating high consistency in their measurement of constructs. It was found that (1) positive gender identity is negatively related to identity conflict for women leaders and (2) patriarchal belief is positively related to identity conflict among women leaders. No relationship was identified between the importance of gender identity and woman–leader identity conflict. This paper contributes to current debates on women leaders by demonstrating that women who identify positively with their gender will not experience identity conflict in their role as leader; instead, identity conflict for women leaders arises through externally induced patriarchal belief.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

*“Women should earn less because they are shorter, they are weaker, and less intelligent”* said Janusz Korwin-Mikke, a Polish Politician in the European Parliament, March 2017 (Baker & Burke, 2017). This statement is a representative expression of

the stereotype that men are more appropriate than women for leadership roles; hence, women are often relegated to supportive or backup roles (Diekmann & Eagly, 2008; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Swim & Hyers, 2009). The influence of gender stereotypes on the proportion women leaders worldwide is evident from the United Nations' data on world leadership: women account for only one in twenty positions as head-of-state (Sinaga, 2016). However, the current situation for women leaders in Indonesia is more complicated. On the one hand, Riantoputra and Gatari (2017) found that Indonesia had reached the 6th highest in the proportion of women senior managers in the world, suggesting that a large number of women were able to attain positions as leaders. Duarsa and Riantoputra (2017), in their research about leadership effectiveness in Bali, a multicultural city in Indonesia, found that perceptions of leadership effectiveness were unrelated to gender. Their research implied that in multicultural cities in Indonesia, people tended to be more open to the possibility of women leaders. However, this tendency is not accepted everywhere in Indonesia. In many other regions, it seems that the attainment of leader roles by women is coupled with a paternalistic and traditional culture that limits women's participation as leaders (Riantoputra & Gatari, 2017). The influence of negative attitudes toward women leaders can be seen from the case of men's refusal to accept a woman to occupy the leadership position in Kesultanan Yogyakarta (Sahana, 2015). Briefly, there is

a possibility for support as well as constraint for women leaders in Indonesia.

The stereotype that men are more appropriate for leadership positions stems from gender stereotypes that assign more communal characteristics to women, such as being warm, caring, cooperative, and selfless (Eagly et al., 2000). More agentic characteristics are ascribed to men, such as being assertive, being competitive, and solving problems, i.e., traits associated with the characteristics of successful leaders (Eagly et al., 2000; Martell et al., 1998). Due to comparisons between communal and agentic characteristics, a woman leader can ultimately be led to feel that one of her identities (either as a woman or leader) contradicts the meanings, norms, and demands that align with her other identities, leading her to experience identity conflict (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Settles, 2004).

Karelaia and Guillen (2014) argued that identity conflict existed when women leaders sense a discrepancy in their identification with their roles as women and their roles as leaders. Because of the negative implications of identity conflict in terms of both physical and psychological harm, research on identity conflict becomes very important (Hirsh & Kang, 2015) such as stress triggers (Dickerson & Kemeny, 2004; van Eck et al., 1996), ill health for reasons ranging from indigestion to heart disease (Lahey, 2009; Smith & MacKenzie, 2006), decreased cognitive function, decreased performance, and low psychological well-being (Karelaia & Guillen, 2014; Settles, 2004).

The current research aims at increasing the understanding of identity conflict in the organizational context, which has only been studied by Settles (2004) and Karelaia and Guillen (2014); thus, this paper is the first to focus on identity conflict in an organizational context in Asia. The specific focus is on male-dominated organizations and organizations with almost equal numbers of male and female employees, because prejudice and negative attitude toward women leaders is more prevalent in these two types of organizations (Kanter, 1977).

### **Woman–Leader Identity Conflict**

In social identity theory, all individuals in a society associate themselves with certain social groups or self-categorize in some way, in a process called “identification” (Turner et al., 1987). Thus, identity is formed through the process of categorization and identification. Tajfel (1982) defined social identity as part of the individual self-concept related to membership in certain social categories.

Over time, individuals develop not just one, but several identities (Hirsh & Kang, 2015). When a person feels that his or her identities are incongruent and contradict each other, he/she experiences an identity conflict. Ashforth and Mael (1989) defined this conflict of identity as a conflict between “values, beliefs, norms, and demands” attached to individual and group identities. In women leaders, identity conflict occurs when they sense an identity discrepancy between their roles as women and as leaders

(Karelaia & Guillen, 2014). Women leaders tend to exhibit greater agentic behavior so that they will be judged to be more effective, which then leads to disapproval from others, resulting in identity conflict (Eagly et al., 2003; Rosette & Tost, 2010; Rudman & Glick, 1999).

According to previous research, several factors can trigger identity conflict (e.g., numbers of identity and representation of women in the organization). However, the focus of the present study is on positive gender identity, the importance of gender identity, and patriarchal belief (Figure 1). The first two factors were chosen because they had recently been investigated by Settles (2004) and Karelaia and Guillen (2014) in organizational contexts. The third was chosen because Indonesia is largely a patriarchal culture (Nashir, 2017). Belief in the patriarchal system can shape values and attitudes that affect individual perceptions of leadership (Ayman et al., 2012); therefore, it is also believed to trigger identity conflict.

### **Positive Gender Identity**

A positive individual evaluation of one’s gender is defined as positive gender identity (Karelaia & Guillen, 2014) and comprises two components: private regard (the individual’s self-evaluation as it relates to their gender) and 2) public regard (the individual’s perception of others’ evaluation of their gender) (Ashmore et al., 2004). Crocker et al.’s (1994) study found that in Asians, private and public regard were highly correlated and, thus, these components could be measured as one

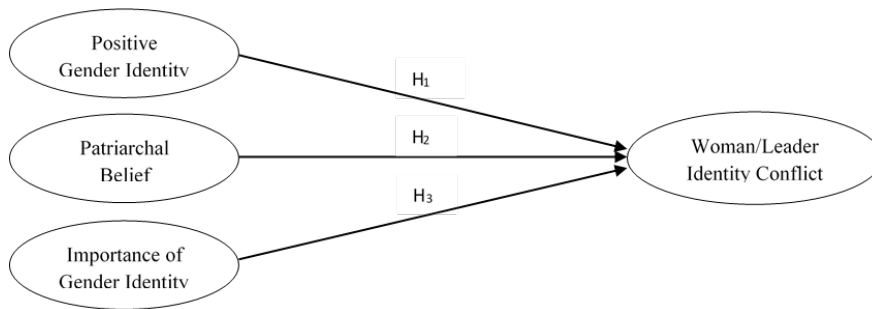


Figure 1. Research model

factor. As evaluation is the source of self-esteem in individuals, gender identity is an important attribute (Crocker & Luhtanen, 1990).

Gender private regard can enhance or maintain a woman's positive feelings regarding her role in dealing with gender-related negative experiences (Settles et al., 2016). Women with positive gender identity will have fewer thoughts and experiences that threaten their self-evaluation as a good leader (Karelaia & Guillen, 2014). Self-esteem tends to be derived from others' judgments rather than through individual evaluations for those raised in a collective culture (Heine et al., 1999); thus, other people's positive judgments on their identities is very important and can influence the development of the individual's identity (Blumer, 1969). Roberts and Nolen-Hoeksema (1994) suggested that women view the evaluation of others as accurate evaluations of their performance and they were more strongly influenced by it than were men. Settles et al. (2016) showed that for women scientists engaged in male-dominated fields, identity conflict could occur in those who believed that others negatively perceived women.

Briefly, when a woman leader believes that her gender characteristics do not prevent her from becoming a successful leader, she feels that her identity as a woman is aligned with her identity as a leader. Therefore, this paper proposes the following hypothesis:

H<sub>1</sub>: Positive gender identity negatively influences woman–leader identity conflict.

### Patriarchal Beliefs

In Indonesia, the family is a source of identity development that can stimulate positive identity for women as leaders (Riantoputra & Gatari, 2017). However, the 1974 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia states explicitly that the role of women is to perform domestic duties. This regulation, together with the importance of family for Indonesian women, places women in a difficult position to develop their identity as leaders. Furthermore, the data from Badan Pusat Statistik [Central bureau of Statistik] (2015) show that 40% of Indonesians are Javanese. In Javanese culture, women are considered as *kanca winking*, having the functions of *macak* (dressing up), *masak* (cooking), and *manak*

(giving birth) (Laksono, 2015). This point of view bears a close relation to the patriarchal culture from which it comes and portrays men as the ultimate authoritative figures and at the core of social organization (Walby, 1990). Patriarchal belief is transmitted explicitly and implicitly on the social level through statements such that women should not work in positions of power because they are inferior to men or are incompetent (Yoon et al., 2015). This persistent message can diminish a woman’s evaluation of her abilities (Denissen, 2010) and makes her feel that her identity as a woman conflicts with her identity as a leader (Karelaia & Guillen, 2014).

Wong (2005) found that women in senior management positions suppressed their feminine identities to underline their competence and capabilities. Thus, women experience a contradictory situation wherein they must meet conflicting expectations, presenting themselves as both feminine and masculine in their work role (Denissen, 2010). Patriarchal belief in situations where women might display these masculine and feminine qualities could eventually lead to identity conflict in women leaders. Therefore, this paper hypothesizes the following:

H<sub>2</sub>: Patriarchal belief positively influences woman–leader identity conflict.

### **Importance of Gender Identity**

Those with multiple identities often rank those identities according to the degree of importance each identity bears on their self-

image, a phenomenon called “importance of identity” (Stryker & Serpe, 1994). The extent to which an identity is psychologically important for an individual can influence whether that identity is perceived to be contrary to another identity (Thoits, 1983). The more important the identity feature that is conflicted, the less commitment they can assign to that identity, thereby increasing negative emotion and forming a gap between expectations and reality (Brook et al., 2008).

Settles (2004) found that when a female scientist made her gender identity her most important identity, the perception of identity conflict would increase because most students and instructors in science fields were men and were dominated by masculine culture (Robinson & McIlwee, 1991; Seymour, 1995). Female scientists with a female-focused self-concept come to feel as if that self-concept is incompatible with their work environment. McCoy and Major (2003) found that women with low gender identity centrality could evade discrimination and psychological distress. As a result of the foregoing, it was concluded that when a woman leader puts her gender identity above her identity as a leader, she feels an increasing identity conflict because the leader identity is more closely associated with men and masculine characteristics (Eagly et al., 2000). This paper presents the following hypothesis:

H<sub>3</sub>: Importance of gender identity positively influences woman–leader identity conflict.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Procedure and Sample

The sample was selected from women leaders who had subordinates and did not work in female-dominated organizations (organizations with > 65% female employees) (Kanter, 1977). This research did not seek or accept participant data from female-dominated organizations because the organizational culture in such institutions would be consistent with there being a majority of women, thus making it, generally speaking, a friendlier environment for women and more difficult to examine identity conflicts.

To test our three hypotheses, this research conducted two stages of data collection using an online survey. The research used an online questionnaire due to the difficulty in obtaining permission to conduct a two-stage study directly involving the companies. The first stage obtained data for the predictors and the second stage collected data on the outcome variable. A total of 700 questionnaire links were sent through social media networks for two weeks in the first stage. Then, 229 of those who completed the first-stage questionnaire were sent a second-stage questionnaire link via e-mail one week after they submitted the first-stage questionnaire. Complete responses for the first and second stages were obtained from 163 women leaders so that the overall response rate was 23.3%. The survey contained items in Indonesian language.

### Measurement

The predictors in this research were positive gender identity, patriarchal belief, and importance of gender identity, and the outcome variable was woman–leader identity conflict. All items used a six-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree and 6 = strongly agree). Each variable in this research was measured using a previously validated scale. This research applied back-to-back translation and conducted confirmatory factor analysis before the data were analyzed, and the test results showed that all instruments had goodness-of-fit indices ranging from 0.98 to 1.00, indicating that all instruments used were valid.

#### Woman-leader Identity Conflict

The degree of woman-leader identity conflict was measured using a six-item version of the Woman-Leader Identity Conflict Scale that had previously demonstrated good reliability ( $\alpha = 0.76$ ; Karelaia & Guillen, 2014). This research added four items that fitted with the definition of woman-leader identity conflict, thus, increasing the reliability ( $\alpha = 0.82$ ). The following is an example of a statement item: “Being a manager/leader does not conflict with my being a woman.” The higher score indicates that the respondent perceived a greater degree of woman-leader identity conflict.

#### Positive Gender Identity

To measure positive gender identity, this research used the Collective Self-Esteem Scale (CSES, taking the private regard and

public regard sub-scales, with four items for each sub-scale) from Luhtanen and Crocker (1992). The eight items that were the same as those in the original version have shown good reliability in prior research ( $\alpha = 0.80$  for each sub-scale; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992). In this research, only six items that had good internal consistency ( $\alpha = 0.81$ ) (e.g., “I feel good being a woman” were used to measure private regard and “In general, others respect women” to measure public regard). The higher score indicates a more positive evaluation of participants’ gender identities.

### **Patriarchal Belief**

Patriarchal belief was measured using the 11-item Patriarchal Belief Scale that has been found to have good reliability in a prior study ( $\alpha = 0.73$ ; Figueredo et al., 2001). In this study, one item was dropped (due to lack of internal consistency), bringing the item number to 10 (e.g., “The ultimate authority in the house is the father/husband”) and increasing reliability ( $\alpha = 0.88$ ). The higher score indicates greater belief in the authority of males in social organizations.

### **Importance of Gender Identity**

Importance of gender identity was measured using a modified version of the CSES (the identity sub-scale) from Luhtanen and Crocker (1992). The four items that were in the original version had shown good reliability in a previous study ( $\alpha = .86$ ; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992). This study added four items that fitted with the definition of importance of gender identity,

bringing the item number to seven (e.g., “Identity as a woman is an important reflection of who I am”) with good internal consistency ( $\alpha = 0.89$ ). The higher score indicates that gender identity is essential for the individual’s self-concept.

### **Control Variables**

The purpose of using control variables is to eliminate relationships or to control certain variables such that the relationship between the predictors and the outcome variable is not influenced by other unspecified variables (Arikunto, 2006). Control variables are obtained from theory and bivariate correlations significant to woman–leader identity conflict. Age, educational level, marital status, and tenure as a leader (in years) were the control variables in this study.

In this research, to reduce the common method bias, this research took temporal separation by means to allow a one-week lag between the measurement of the predictors and the outcome variable (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Additionally, psychological separation was also implemented by using different cover stories to make it appear that the measurement of the predictors was not connected with or related to the measurement of the outcome variable (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

## **RESULTS**

Table 1 shows that participants were from many cities throughout Indonesia. Most of them were from the island of Java (76.7%) while the remaining came from several

other big islands (23.3%). Most of them worked in the consultancy and service (14.7%) and finance and banking industries (13%) while the remainder represented a variety of other industries. Most participants worked in a male-dominated organization (76.6%) and less than 25% worked in neutral organizations (organizations with an equal number of male and female workers). Furthermore, Table 2 shows the age range of to be 27-33 years old ( $M_{age} = 31.37$ ,  $SD_{age} = 6.733$ ) and 66.9% had at least a bachelor's degree. The sample was married (51.5%) and unmarried (48.5%) in almost equal proportions. The participants' average tenure as a leader was 4.5 years ( $SD = 4.36$ ), with one having 24 years of experience.

All measurement instruments used in this research used a measurement scale ranging from 1 to 6. Table 2 demonstrates that the sample has a relatively low woman-leader identity conflict. However,

participants showed quite high mean values for their degree of positive gender identity, patriarchal belief, and importance of gender identity.

Table 2 shows that age ( $r = -0.391$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), educational level ( $r = -0.192$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), marital status ( $r = -0.264$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), and tenure as a leader ( $r = -0.445$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) were negatively related to woman-leader identity conflict. Based on these results, it can be concluded that younger women leaders, with lower educational levels and lower tenure as leaders, experience a higher degree of identity conflict. Variables that have a significant relationship with identity conflict can be controlled in the regression analysis. Table 2 also shows that there are negative significant correlations between positive gender identity ( $r = -0.414$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and importance of gender identity ( $r = -0.206$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) with woman-leader identity conflict. This means that the more

Table 1  
*Participant demographics*

Demographic Aspects	Total	Percentage
Type of Organization:		
Male-dominated	115	76.6%
Neutral	48	23.3%
Residence of Participants:		
Java	125	76.7%
Sumatera	31	19%
Kalimantan	4	2.4%
Sulawesi	3	1.9%
Type of Company:		
Finance & Banking	21	13%
FMCG	14	8.5%
Mining, Oil, & Gas	13	8%
Retail	10	6%
Consultant and Services	24	14.7%
Others	81	49.8%



Table 2

*Descriptive statistics*

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1 Age (years)	31.37	6.73	1							
2 Educational Level	3.26	0.56	0.293**	1						
3 Marital Status	-	-	0.492**	0.106	1					
4 Tenure as a leader (in year)	4.54	4.36	0.754**	0.282**	0.323**	1				
5 Positive gender identity	5.08	0.61	0.203**	0.093	0.087	0.234**	1			
6 Patriarchal belief	3.53	1.04	-0.195*	-0.159*	-0.060	-0.075	0.108	1		
7 Importance of gender identity	4.83	0.76	0.151	0.056	0.162*	0.209**	0.611**	0.185*	1	
8 Woman/Leader identity conflict	2.18	0.70	-0.391**	-0.192*	-0.264**	-0.445**	-0.414**	0.202**	-0.206**	1

Notes: N = 163; \*\*p < 0.01 and \*p < 0.05

positively women leaders perceive their gender and believe that others perceive their gender in a positive way, the less identity conflict they experience. Additionally, the more important gender identity was for women leaders, the less identity conflict they felt. One variable did have a positive significant correlation with woman–leader identity conflict, namely, patriarchal belief ( $r = 0.202, p < 0.05$ ). This suggests that the more individuals believe that men are superior to women, the greater the identity conflict they feel.

Hierarchical multiple regression analysis is needed to compute the variance of the predictors on the outcome variable. Because regression analysis can be used with the assumption that residue in the population is normally distributed (Field, 2013), a data normality test was conducted. Based on those results, the Kolmogorov–Smirnov significance value was  $p = 0.20$ . This means that the residue in the data obtained was normally distributed ( $p > 0.05$ ).

Regression analysis was done in two stages: the control variables first followed by the predictors. Hierarchical multiple regression analysis was done in the first stage with the inclusion of demographic variables that showed significant correlations with woman–leader identity conflict in bivariate correlation analysis (e.g., age, level of education, marital status, and tenure as a leader). In the second stage, positive gender identity, patriarchal belief, and importance of gender identity were inserted in the regression.

Of the two models listed in Table 3, the second-stage model is considered to be best for the prediction of the variance of woman–leader identity conflict. This is because the model in stage two has a higher  $R^2$  than the first stage model, which is 0.365 ( $F = 11.815$ ). These results indicate that demographic variables, positive gender identity, patriarchal belief, and importance of gender identity can contribute 36.5% of the variance of woman–leader identity conflict. The contribution of predictors without demographic variables to the variance of woman–leader identity conflict is 14.5%.

From regression analysis, it was found that there were no significant effects of age ( $\beta_{age} = 0.054, p > 0.05$ ), educational level ( $\beta_{education} = -0.033, p > 0.05$ ), or marital status ( $\beta_{status} = -0.146, p > 0.05$ ) toward woman–leader identity conflict. On the other hand, tenure as a leader ( $\beta_{tenure} = -0.338, p < 0.01$ ) had significant negative effect on woman–leader identity conflict. Table 3 also suggests that there are no significant effects of the importance of gender identity ( $\beta_{importance} = 0.096, p > 0.05$ ; i.e.,  $H_3$  is not supported) on woman–leader identity conflict. However, this research found significant negative effects of positive gender identity ( $\beta_{pgi} = -0.410, p < 0.01$ ; i.e.,  $H_1$  is supported) on woman–leader identity conflict. This indicates that the more positively a woman leader perceives her gender identity and feels that others perceive her gender identity positively, the less identity conflict she feels. There was also a significant positive effect of patriarchal belief ( $\beta_{belief} = 0.200, p < 0.01$ ;

Table 3

*Hierarchical multiple regression*

	$\beta$ Stage 1	$\beta$ Stage 2
Age	-0.045	0.054
Educational level	-0.067	-0.033
Marital status	-0.121	-0.146
Tenure as a leader	-0.353**	-0.338**
Positive gender identity		-0.410**
Patriarchal belief		0.200**
Importance of gender identity		0.096
R <sup>2</sup>	0.220	0.365
$\Delta R^2$	0.220	0.145
F	11.127	11.815
df1, df2	4,158	3,155

Notes: N = 163; \*\*p < .01 and \*p < 0.05

i.e., H<sub>2</sub> is supported) on woman–leader identity conflict. This means that the more women leaders believe that men are superior to women, the greater the identity conflict that they feel.

## DISCUSSIONS

This research found that positive gender identity, patriarchal belief, and importance of gender identity accounted for 14.5% of the variance in woman–leader identity conflict, indicating that other variables may affect woman–leader identity conflict. This is a task set for future studies. Variables such as tenure as a leader can be tested as it was found to have a significant influence, in spite of the fact that it was controlled. Chan and Drasgow (2001) found that employment as a leader was positively associated with leadership potency as perceived by the

environment and the individual’s supervisor. It implies that tenure as leaders act as affirmation of the individual’s capability to lead, and it can prevent the occurrence of identity conflict in women leaders.

Regression analyses demonstrate that when women leaders positively viewed their feminine identity, their identity conflict was reduced. In other words, when someone is comfortable with their identity as a woman, they will experience less woman–leader identity conflict. This is because having a positive social identity allows individuals to maintain the perception that they are worthy (Hogg et al., 2004). The more positive a woman’s social identity, the greater access they have to individual resources of self-affirmation that will allow them to better cope with thoughts and experiences that threaten their own identity (Dutton et

al., 2010). The more positive their social identity, the greater freedom they feel in their methods and techniques of leading and the more likely it is that they can develop ways of leading to make them feel comfortable and authentic (Ibarra et al., 2010). Positive gender identity can also reduce the need to suppress gender-typical behaviors, thereby reducing the tension and fatigue that result from this self-regulatory process (Vohs et al., 2005).

Among other predictors, positive gender identity has the strongest association with identity conflict. This implies that this variable is very important; suggesting the importance for further research to examine this variable using various research designs. Quasi-experimental research, like the study conducted by Karellaia and Guillen (2014), can be performed but with different manipulation techniques. Quasi-experimental designs are important for discovering causality among variables (Cozby & Bates, 2012). This can render it easier for practitioners who are attempting to design ways to improve women's positive identity.

This paper also shows that patriarchal belief can increase woman-leader identity conflict. As explained by Matsumoto and Juang (2013), beliefs are influenced by how strongly individuals' cultural values have been instilled and this may affect perceptions of gender difference. Current research shows that in Indonesia, patriarchal belief remains a real force to this day (Nashir, 2017). The 1974 law on marriage (subsection 34, clause 1) clearly defines

the different roles of men and women. Furthermore, patriarchal values are still preserved in Indonesia and usually as an interpretation of religious teachings that place men in a higher position than women.

However, it seems that the effect of patriarchal belief is not similar for everyone in Indonesia. As explained by Riantoputra and Gatari (2017) that in Indonesia coexist culture that empower women—that helps Indonesia to be the 6<sup>th</sup> highest women leaders in the world—as well as culture that disempower women—such as revealed in the law on marriage. For this reason, patriarchal belief is vital for further investigation into the conflicts of women leaders in organizations in Indonesia. It is possible that patriarchal belief serves as a trigger for not granting women leadership positions, especially in male-dominated organizations where women are not prototypical leaders (see Riyadi et al., 2019). For future research into patriarchal beliefs, the use of the Patriarchal Belief Scale employed in this study is recommended. The Patriarchal Belief Scale can also be used to measure the sub-scale institutional power of men as developed by Yoon et al. (2015).

No significant effect was found between the importance of gender identity and woman-leader identity conflict. This is inconsistent with the results of the study conducted by Settles (2004). There are several possible explanations for this. First, the aspect of the importance of their gender identity makes women comfortable with themselves and, thus, leads them to focus on the positive aspects of their identity

as women, thereby helping them to avoid negative consequences (Sellers & Shelton, 2003). However, high identity centrality does not protect against the pressures caused by sexism (Szymanski & Lewis, 2016). This is because individuals who consider gender to be an important aspect in their self-concept may, to control feelings of depression, anger, fatigue, and conflict with others associated with discrimination, let go of that identity when they experience sexism (Brondolo et al., 2009).

Non-significant results can also occur because identity as a leader is also important for individuals. When two conflicting identities are judged to be equally important, individuals will tend to separate them and assign each a role to play among those required by the individual (Settles et al., 2002). This role separation by women leaders changes according to their varied contexts and prevents identity conflict (Settles et al., 2002). This is because the separation of roles between being a woman and being a leader comes about by focusing on fulfilling the roles and tasks of each such that they can perform well in both (Settles et al., 2002). This statement is in line with the concept of “Bifurcation of Consciousness” given by Dorothy E. Smith, where women will split their consciousness in two to establish themselves as knowledgeable and competent beings within society and as leaders (Mann, 2008). In other words, it seems that for Indonesian women, their identity as a woman is separated from their identity as a leader. A study on women leaders in Indonesia by Riantoputra et al.

(2017) showed that in a multicultural urban area in Indonesia, positive leader identity was not related to gender but rather to the traits of the leaders. This aspect warrants further investigation.

Finally, organizational context (i.e., female-dominated, male-dominated, and neutral organizations) may influence identity conflict of women leaders. Current research focuses on male-dominated organizations (with a few neutral organizations); however, future research may want to investigate the impact of organizational context on women leader’s identity conflict.

### **Limitations and Strengths**

A limitation of this research is its use of a cross-sectional study design. Such a design impedes drawing proper conclusions about causality. It is advisable for future studies to design experimental or longitudinal studies to determine what causal relationships can be found among the research variables (Cozby & Bates, 2012).

This research has several strengths. First, the dataset in this study was collected in two stages, using a temporal separation technique (where data regarding predictors and the outcome variable were taken at separate times) and psychological separation (by making different questionnaire titles and cover stories, and not giving information that stage one and stage two questionnaires were interrelated). This was intended to avoid hypothesis guessing, which could be a source of bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Additionally, the number sampled was quite large. Taking data in two stages

usually produces a large response only in the first stage that decreases greatly in the second stage (Fuchs, 2012). In this study, 229 questionnaires were returned in the first stage and 163 in the second stage. The second-stage response rate obtained from those who had responded in the first stage was quite high (71.1%). Another strength of this study is its use of measurement instruments with good levels of reliability and with Cronbach's alpha ranging from .81 to .89 (Kaplan & Sacuzzo, 2005), which minimized errors in the results (Kumar, 2011).

### **Practical Implications**

As positive gender identity was found to be important for reducing identity conflict, strategies should be implemented to maintain positive gender identity. Such strategies begin by equal opportunities in the selection process. Further, celebrations of gender identity as women should be encouraged. For example, by conducting seminars on the strengths of women leaders, or by choosing the best women leaders in a particular year. Providing other equal opportunities for female employees is strongly recommended.

The results of the research also indicate that employment as a leader is also important in reducing identity conflict in women leaders. For women with shorter tenures as leader, the development of identity as a leader can be encouraged through leadership training. This is based on the results of research showing that the longer one's tenure as a leader, the less woman-leader

identity conflict will occur. A certain period of work as a leader can help individuals develop their identities as a leader.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

The increasing number of women serving as leaders in organizations has not completely changed the stigma of gender differences; in other words, individuals still tend to perceive the characteristics of women and those of successful leaders as contradictory. Few studies have examined factors affecting identity conflicts in women leaders. Using a rigorous research method to limit common method bias, the findings of this research indicate that positive gender identity can decrease identity conflict in women leaders, whereas patriarchal belief may increase identity conflict. The results of this study can contribute to the development of literature on identity within the organization.

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