

Mahathir as the Prime Minister: Peak of “Paternalistic Leadership” in Malaysia

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Abstract: This article attempts to describe Mahathir in the style of paternalistic leadership in the system of governmental value in Malaysia. It is traced through the influence of local wisdom which is believed to form the leadership character of the 7th Malaysian Prime Minister. The initial stance of this article was taken with reference to a previous study when Mahathir took office as the 4th Prime Minister of Malaysia. The analysis method is content analysis by describing 12 selected speech and media texts of Mahathir over a one-year period. The analysis observed the value of paternalistic leadership through “Work Ethics”, “Communalism”, “Authority Orientation”, and “Familism”. These four values were chosen because they are often discussed by scholars as the values underlying the Asian leadership style. The data is encoded manually. The result of this study is an explanation of paternal values of Mahathir in governing. In conclusion, the paternalistic leadership in Malaysia has reached its peak when the skills of a statesman are still in demand. Mahathir not only guided the new community free from colonialism and brought it forward with mental and physical preparation to overcome the global challenges of the 20th century, he also led and continued the works related to the “relaxation” of the past leadership. Most importantly, it is incorporated indirectly into the local wisdom of the community with some manipulation of values to suit the current needs.

Keywords: Mahathir Mohamad, paternalistic leadership, value system, local wisdom

1. Introduction

Mahathir is an excellent statesman who successfully mobilized pragmatic actions in a leadership style and effective implementation of values to achieve planned mission and vision. His return to the country for the second time as the 7th Prime Minister of Malaysia was a surprise even though Pakatan Harapan had planned and worked for it. It happened with the transition of the federal government power on May 10, 2018 in conjunction with the 14th Malaysia Election and took the title of the world’s oldest leader. Mahathir, in most articles, is often described as a leader who takes in the spirit of the western democracy but his execution is limited to his own mould.

In the context of this article, his leadership seeks to be dragged into a tendency to lead with paternalistic style and values that is a principal or system of governing or controlling a country, a group of workers, and so on based on the relationship between a father and a son. Paternalism is a paternalistic style of leadership where strong domination is coupled with equitable attention and consideration (Westwood & Chan, 1992).

Mahathir became the 4th Prime Minister for 22 years from 1981-2003. He started his career as chief executive of the government at 55 and was considered the youngest candidate on the Prime Minister’s list back then. However, the belief given by Abdul Razak Hussein, the second Malaysian Prime Minister and Hussein Onn, the third Malaysian Prime Minister certainly has its own distinctiveness for the future of Malaysia. His main success was transforming the Malaysian economic landscape based on agricultural economy to industrial-based economy. The “ultra” and “extremist” characters were given to him on the basis that he struggled for the Malay nationalists. From another aspect,

he was described as a dictator and a “soft authoritarian” by parties that are dissatisfied with his various developmental decision and leadership styles. Nevertheless, these did not prevent him from ruling and determining the kind of development that he dreamed of. He even resigned from his post when his time came in dignity.

The focus of his developmental thinking from the past to the present has not changed even after becoming the 7th Prime Minister. It begins with a system of values in the construction of civilizations in which the policies introduced clearly convey the message and explain the stance that emphasizes development management based on its own mould. In some cases, corrections to some of the values that were considered to have been damaged by the alleged elements of the kleptocracy were the main agenda. The Look East policy remains a key reference in encouraging Malaysians to absorb the positive work value of the Japanese.

As such, the development carried out by a nation cannot be overlooked by the cultural patterns practiced by its leaders and members of society. Development movements carried out by unique methods based on local wisdom produce unique synergies that are paternalistic in nature and define the shape of planned national development. Therefore, the main purpose of this article is to answer the following questions:

1. Is it true that local wisdom continues to underlie Mahathir’s leadership in his government?
2. What is the tendency of value dimension in his governance?
3. How are the developmental actions relate to the paternalistic values of a leader in a leading his country?

2. Literature Review

The style and character of the leadership associated with the concept of culture and its hold on local wisdom in leading development are still poorly studied. Even more so when it comes to the idea of paternalistic leadership over the leadership. Variables of local wisdom such as values, norms, attitudes, worldviews, traditional beliefs, and so on are used as guiding and research analysis tools. Values are the essence of culture. Values act as guidelines, bonds, directive, measures, actions, practices, perception, considerations, and so on. Values are defined as the beliefs that motivate an individual or an institution to act in a way that is based on the core values of the community. Therefore, value is the hold and belief that is the basis of an action, in particular the goal to be achieved within a certain period of time (Mustafa, 1994; Mohd Tap et al., 1993).

In this regard, one of the values of Asia reflected in effective Asian leadership style is the element of paternalistic leadership value. It may be considered irrelevant in this post-modernization and globalization era, but past studies have shown that it can still come back and still be strong. In India, for example, there is the practice of “paternal authoritativeness”. Authorities need to be able to anticipate the needs of their people and instil confidence in the needs and life services as a family like the leader’s family members. Therefore, the required qualities of a leader are to be well-aware and knowledgeable of what needs to be done in various situations for the good of the people. Leaders are not only responsible for ensuring political stability but also for providing good advice and offering support to the people (Brislin, 1993; Kumar & Saxena, 1983; Sinha, 1980).

Similar results were reported by Yao (1987) in the People’s Republic of China which advocated the concept of “paternal authoritativeness”, where leaders need to be strong, effective, and knowledgeable. The Chinese value system and its work style are still dominated by traditional value systems (Low, 2006). Meanwhile, in Japan, the concept of paternalistic leadership is also adopted by the practice of “*oyabun*” or “Father of Leadership” (Hanada & Yoshikawa, 1991). Likewise, in Indonesia, generally workers are obedient and tend to expect employers to provide facilities such as transportation, food, and water supply. The strong practice of the concept of *Sumonggo Dawuh* in the context of a leader should be a guiding example to those that are led. Managers like fathers take care of children’s interests and needs. *Sumonggo Dawuh* can be interpreted as a way in which the employees admit that him to be a supervisor as an example to follow (Low, 2005).

In carrying out the research, this article referred to an empirical study conducted by So Young Kim (2010) which states that there are four (4) values (dimensions) that are frequently mentioned when discussing the values of Asian society. These values are familism value, communalism or communitarianism value, authority orientation value, and work ethic value.

According to Farh and Cheng (2000:91), paternalistic leadership is “a style of leadership that combines discipline, authority, and fatherly benevolence”. While Aycan (2015) pointed out that paternalistic leadership is practiced in a collective and power practicing society. It also refers to the relationship between leaders and followers where the leaders provide care, supervision, and guidance to their followers in their professional and personal lives through caregiving as fathers to children and, in return, expect loyalty and respect from their followers. Through this leadership style, a chief or leader is likely to be involved in the life of his followers as expected by a collectively motivated community. This is because they consider it to be one of the ways in which the chief or leader provides care and protection to his followers (Jackson, 2016).

The fatherly benevolence shows that leaders naturally have a genuine concern for the welfare of their followers. While in return, the followers show loyalty to their leaders due to the respect and appreciation that rise in themselves (Jackson, 2016). This leadership style is still practiced and seen as effective in many business cultures such as the

Middle East, Asia Pacific and Latin America (Farh et al. 2006; Martinez, 2003). However, this leadership style receives poor perception from the Western society, where it is considered “a form of hidden and dangerous discrimination” (Colella et al., 2005: 26).

The literature reviews above justify what is happening to Mahathir’s leadership today. Malaysians have democratically allowed a veteran politician who has retired for almost 15 years to return to the governing throne. In fact, he represented the BERSATU party, the youngest party of 2 years old and joined with Pakatan Harapan which has the dominant and influential parties, DAP and PKR. Mahathir represents only the smallest party with the smallest majority vote. Hence, what is the explanation for Malaysians’ belief in this?

3. Mahathir and Value System

Mahathir Mohamad was born on 20 December 1925 in Seberang Perak, Alor Setar, Kedah. He is the youngest of nine siblings. Mahathir describes his early life as follows:

“My family is of the lower middle class and we live in what is known as squat today. My father worked as a school teacher and later as a government auditor. He raised his family to be quite orthodox, disciplined, and educational enough” (Mahathir, 1999; pp 15).

His mother emphasized the aspects of Islamic teachings from an early age. Mahathir learned religion and the Quran from his own mother and religious teachers at school. He admits that his mother has shaped his personality by teaching values that he has maintained such as being modest and unselfish. Mahathir got early (1932) for two years at a Malay School before continuing his education at an English school, currently known as the Sultan Abdul Hamid College. He is often with his books and his English is very good. In addition, he has a high degree of general knowledge because of the many books and newspapers at his home (Zahidi Zainol Rashid, 1999).

In this regard, Alfred Adler’s Theory of Personality (1870-1967) explains that one’s personality is strongly influenced by heredity, environment, and creativity in the environment. In fact, Alfred, in his theoretical analysis, listed the dominant attitude of the youngest as very realistic and ambitious. Even in the physiological field, the psychology of the youngest child is often categorized as optimistic in pursuing his or her dream without fear of failure. They are more courageous to follow the heart than the older children in their family. The dominant youngest will be able to see the positive side of everything, believing that everything can be solved and solutions for problems can always be found.

Meanwhile, the framework of the value system held by Mahathir was translated from his writings before being translated into the policies of development during his era of leadership. Through newspaper back then, he expressed issues, expressed opinions, and proposals on development issues, especially the Malays. His first book, *The Malay Dilemma* (1970), stated that the Malay backwardness is due to genes and easy environmental factors. *The Mental Revolution* (1971) put forward the cause of the Malay backwardness stems from mental poverty rather than money poverty. Mahathir listed seventeen bad attitudes found in the Malay culture, that were the lack of initiative, lack of curiosity, weak rational mind, lack of originality, lack of imagination, believe in fate, and others. His recommendation in his book to change the fate of the Malays was that they must change the way of thinking or mental revolutionize (Abdul Rahman Abdul Aziz, 2006).

Mahathir believes in the development of quality infrastructure from the East such as Japan and Korea. Both countries are often made as role models of values and development by establishing the Look East Policy. It not only provides economic confidence but also symbolically and psychologically. The “work ethic” of the Japanese and Korean people who emphasize discipline, loyalty, and perseverance has served as a driving force for countries in economic and social developments. This work ethic was born from a philosophy that stated that groups and countries are more important than individuals (Huntington, 2008).

He characterized the local personality, “insular personality”, as a thinker who focused more on local perspectives and needs, as did Japan, an insular nation. The Japanese have successfully maintained local characteristics and values as their source of strength in the face of challenges to progress (Landes, 2000). He asserted that

“...my experiences have at least taught me that each country in Asia has the right to develop according to its own mould based on the unique identity and history” (Mahathir, 1999a:14).

Mahathir clearly wants the foundations and identities in the local framework to be maintained in order to achieve progress. Religious and good values are strengthened so as not to lose direction and hold on to the vision of national development. He emphasized that foreign values cannot be a measure of success of the society and nation. This shows that he believes in a strong religious framework and the spirit of Malay nationalism from the local perspective in the face of challenges to progress.

Some values need to be discarded because of their negative and non-competitive nature. He even admitted spending a lot of time in his life to eliminate negative values, especially in the Malay community. Not all values in society are good. Some societies inculcate the ethics of baseless fatalism, respect for domination, self-gratification, pride, and arrogance. Many also find inequality (caste concept), women oppressed and exploitation of children in the

form of physical labour (slave concept). There are also unfriendly societies, distinguishing between boys and girls, lacking affection and respect for the weak and disabled. Mahathir is only realistic in expressing good local values and that needs to be maintained by the Asian community for the survival of the country.

Every society must be allowed to find its own form and process according to its own mould. The people of East Asia have their own set of values in building and managing their communities and countries in their own way without having to resort to external values especially from the West. In this regard Mahathir stated:

“Asian values are Asian values. American values are American values. Both can converge and from the convergence may come a mutual understanding and appreciation for the wisdom of the other and hopefully a merger will exist between all good values and rejection of bad or evil values. Let us admit that no one has a monopoly on wisdom.” (Mahathir, 2003).

However, in today’s context, a framework of values, religion and the Malay nationalist fervour is translated by Mahathir with different genres. Some of his views and actions were thin, beginning to change, requiring different approaches and definitions, and in a high-tolerance mode. As the 7th Prime Minister, he leads a government with various components of political coalition, Pakatan Harapan who has different ideologies but is able to work together to bring down the previous government. It was very different from the political coalition component of the Barisan Nasional when he was the 4th Prime Minister. This is where Mahathir’s credibility and fatherhood as statesman is more challenged, yearned, and exposed.

4. Research Methodology

Wilson and Arnold (1964) in Abdul Mua’ti (2007) stated that “speech is the inspiration that is triggered, transmitted and expressed through thoughts, sounds and body movements that stimulate the audience and the speaker who sometimes influence thought, taste, and subsequent action”.

This paper seeks to trace the text of Mahathir’s speech as an influence and support for the statement and agenda of values that it seeks to convey. The paternal perspectives sought to be understood and identified through the local wisdom highlighted in the four values observed. The following is the Speech Text Document of Mahathir as shown in Table 1.

Fig. 1 - Mahathir’s speech text document

No.	Code	Speech Text	Type of Text	Date	Venue
1.	S1	Monthly Meeting with Civil Servants of Prime Minister’s Office May 2018		May 21, 2018	Dataran Perdana Bangunan Perdana Putrajaya
2.	S2	Monthly Meeting with Civil Servants of Prime Minister’s Office July 2018		July, 9 2018	Dataran Perdana Bangunan Perdana Putrajaya
3.	S3	Monthly Meeting with Civil Servants of Prime Minister’s Office August 2018		August 13, 2018	Dataran Perdana Bangunan Perdana Putrajaya
4.	S4	Monthly Meeting with Civil Servants of Prime Minister’s Office October 2018	Monthly Meeting with Civil Servants of Prime Minister’s Office Texts	October 10, 2018	Dataran Perdana Bangunan Perdana Putrajaya
5.	S5	Monthly Meeting with Civil Servants of Prime Minister’s Office January 2019		January 14, 2019	Dataran Perdana Bangunan Perdana Putrajaya
6.	S6	Monthly Meeting with Civil Servants of Prime Minister’s Office February 2019		February 11, 2019	Dataran Perdana Bangunan Perdana Putrajaya
7.	S7	Monthly Meeting with Civil Servants of Prime Minister’s Office April 2019		April 2, 2019	Dataran Perdana Bangunan Perdana Putrajaya

No.	Code	Speech Text	Type of Text	Date	Venue
8.	S8	Monthly Meeting with Civil Servants of Prime Minister’s Office July 2019		July 2, 2019	Dataran Perdana Bangunan Perdana Putrajaya
9.	S9	Hari Raya Aidilfitri Message 2018	Hari Raya Text	June 15, 2018	Mainstream Media
10.	S10	Independence Day Special Message 2018	Independence Day Speech Text	August 31, 2018	Putrajaya Malaysia
11.	S11	BERSATU Chairman's Policy Speech	Party Speech Text	December 29, 2018	PICC Putrajaya
12.	S12	Prime Minister's message in conjunction of One Year of Pakatan Harapan	Party Speech Text	May 9, 2019	PICC Putrajaya
13.	S13	Hari Raya Aidilfitri Message 2019	Hari Raya Text	June 5, 2019	Mainstream Media

The selected speech texts and the focus of this study is i) Speech Text of the Monthly Meeting with Civil Servants of Prime Minister’s Office (S1-S8), ii) Hari Raya Text (S9 and S13), and iii) Independence Day Speech Text (S10), and Party Speech Text (S11 and S12). All four types of texts are official texts that are accessible and widely available to the public and policy makers with consistent delivery every year.

The first reading of each speech text was done to familiarize the researcher with the language style, presentation method, to understand the true meaning that Mahathir conveyed in his speech text. Next, a second reading was conducted to identify the paragraphs of speech that had ‘developmental value’ in relation to local wisdom. The most important thing at this stage is to classify the values based on the predefined value dimension. While third reading was specific to the paragraphs that have identified and classified its value dimension and development values. It was read over again to ensure that the predefined classification of value dimension is accurate and in line with the overall meaning of the speech to be delivered.

5. Findings and Discussion

5.1 Series and Passage of Speech Texts

Table 2 shows the analysis of the tendency to centralize each of Mahathir’s text (S1 to S13) to each of the values focused in this study. It is defined as a value dimension (D_B, D_P, D_E, and D_K). There are thirteen (13) speech texts of Mahathir covering four (4) speech series.

Table 2 - Tendency distribution of series and passage of Mahathir’s speech texts to value dimension

Text	Monthly Meeting with Civil Servants of Prime Minister’s Office					Text	Hari Raya Aidilfitri, Independence Day, and Party				
Code	D _B	D _P	D _E	D _K	Total	Code	D _B	D _P	D _E	D _K	Total
S1	5	1	10	0	16	S9	0	4	5	3	12
S2	0	2	9	0	11	S10	3	7	3	0	13
S3	0	0	3	0	3	S11	7	11	5	0	23
S4	10	0	1	0	11	S12	8	10	7	0	25
S5	2	7	1	0	10	S13	0	2	5	0	7
S6	3	5	5	0	13						
S7	1	2	9	1	13						
S8	0	1	4	0	5						
Total	21	18	42	1	82	Total	18	34	25	3	80
Overall Total							39	52	67	4	162

Notes:

D_B = “Authority-Oriented” value dimension

D_E = “Work Ethics” value dimension

D_P = “Communalism” value dimension

D_K = “Familism” value dimension

Based on the Tendency Distribution Table above, a total of 162 times the overall text passage associated with the value dimension have been identified. It can be divided into 3 consistencies, namely low, medium, and high.

The Hari Raya Speech Text Series (S9 and S13) is an alternative speech text selected in complementing the text’s diversity. It is considered popular and have a way to listen to most of the people, especially the Malay Muslim community. However, the S9 speech text was identified to be of moderate consistency while the S13 speech text was of low consistency.

The Independence Speech Text Series 2018 (S10) is the only text of the speech that was quoted in this article. The Independence Speech is a larger and more fundamental platform for delivering speech to the whole community. Through the independence speeches, leaders place the value of patriotism and nationalism as the foundation for the societal development. The formation of local values that start from the national spirit should be nurtured in speech. The independence speech is also a medium of leadership responsibility to the people by looking at past history and taking lessons from it. The call to work and develop with high spirit of nationalism is embodied in the text of independence speech.

Meanwhile, the Text Series of the Monthly Meeting with Civil Servants (S1 to S8) is the most widely used text in this article. It has noted a moderate consistency of value dimension except for S3 and S8 which scored a low consistency. The Text Series of the Monthly Meeting with the Civil Servants is a text that has a very formal value specific to the highest and foremost civil servants. It reflects Mahathir’s hopes, aspirations, and instructions to civil servants who are policy makers.

Finally, in line with the government’s transition after 61 years, it can be expected that the party and alliance within the party that formed the government still play an important role in influencing and affecting its development and society. In this regard, the Party Text Series (S11-S12) clearly has a high consistency. The Party Text is still a key tool in mobilizing party members and the community. In the context of a post-independence country, the party is seen as the backbone of the government. Party idealism is translated through government idealism and subsequently the development to be achieved in the future. Accordingly, leaders will take this opportunity to apply their ideas of leadership and governance with local values and wisdom. Mahathir made the party speech as a great responsibility because it was the party and the party members who had given him the opportunity to lead and execute his ideas.

5.2 Value Agenda of Mahathir as the 7th Prime Minister

Figure 1 shows an analysis of the tendency of Mahathir’s text passage to each value dimension of the study.

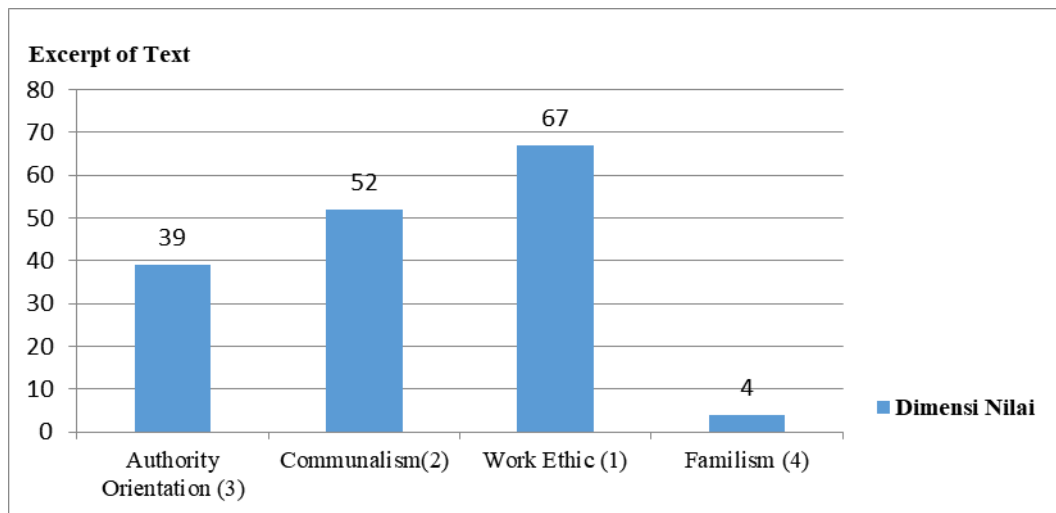


Fig. 1 - Tendency of Mahathir’s text passage to value dimension

Based on Figure 1, it is found that the passage of Mahathir’s text is very dominant with the “Work Ethics” value dimension. A total of 67 passages of text have been identified that contain the said element of the value dimension. The “Communalism” value dimension follows in second with 52 passages of text in total. The “Authority-Oriented” value dimension came in third with 39 textual passages while the “Family” value dimension came in fourth with only 4 text passages.

It is not difficult to anticipate the “Work Ethics” value dimension in particular and local wisdom in general as an element that dominates the text of Mahathir’s speech. In fact, a study by an author entitled “100 Days of New Malaysia: Peak of “Work Ethics” value dimension, Mahathir also gave the same value dimension.

PKR president Anuar Ibrahim on September 15, 2018 in Singapore stated

“Mahathir is Mahathir... strict, frank, provocative, not playful with his words. Well, we all understand him, but is he committed to reform? He made it clear that Malaysia must emerge as a democracy.” (Sinar Harian Online, 2018)

It has successfully continued development works in Malaysia. Mahathir received a leadership role in dramatic fashion in 2018. The legacy of the previous government that is said to have left the values of kleptocracy is seen as a burden on the development agenda. It was a lot harder than it was when he inherited it in 1981. Therefore, hypothetically, the Authority-Oriented value dimension takes the top or at least 2nd place in the setting of the value dimension.

However, the Communalism Value Dimension took the second place. In this regard, racial and social elements are not discussed and meant to be racist by emphasizing that one's own ethnic group is superior. It is a position of value that specifies that; it is important to put the welfare and goals of the group ahead of personal preference. Jim Baker (2009) argues that if there is an element of individual importance in Asian values, it is used solely for the mutual benefit of larger groups. This is clear in the context of economic domination. It will only continue to create stability, maintaining a society of high work ethic.

Mahathir at a meeting with members of the Prime Minister's Department in May 2018 stated:

“I hope that with this change of government, we will be able to fix the problems facing the country, especially the financial crisis. We believe we can solve this problem. But we need competent, efficient and trustworthy administration. That is my only hope and I thank you for the opportunity to explain a little bit about the position of the new government we have chosen recently. (Mahathir, 2018)

The consistency of opinions and values and beliefs that the people gave him explained totally the paternalistic value he had. In fact, in his other argument, the paternalistic leadership is able to translate what is said to be a paternalistic state. All of the “Asian values” that their leaders defined and created became a useful tool to validate them as a paternalistic state, bringing rapid economic development and being able to adapt to the changing world (Han, 1999).

The consistency of the “Work Ethic” value dimension as a priority in all dimensions is translated into the Look East Policy that was introduced on February 8, 1982. It is seen as reappearing in the second phase of the present time. Many consider it to be a boon to the country's economy in particular to attract Japanese foreign direct investment and the confidence of Japanese companies to operate in Malaysia, while it is a combination of three elements, namely symbolic, economic and psychological from different historical, social and cultural values. The Malaysian concept and Look East Policy are clear - build a system of values, work culture and ethics that will bring success; because it is also a matter of personal and national dignity. Each will feel a sense of shame if one fails to reach one's final goal with a definite decision because it is a matter of self-reputation (Sivamurugan Pandian, 2018).

5.3 Peak of Values Application by a Father Leadership

Mahathir emphasizes the value of noble living. At the same time, this value depends on the local wisdom underlying a society. Thus, in many cases, he was “manipulating” the local wisdom, especially the Malay Muslim values. In many ways, these values are universal values that can be shared by all.

The culture of working hard and not wasting time is always emphasized by him in his speeches. Working not just for wages but for being proud of the work in the chain contributing to the nation's recovery is something he aspires to. Mahathir embodies it as a spirit of patriotism. According to him;

“I have mentioned many times that the Japanese have a very strong sense of shame. But they are not as shy as we are. We feel ashamed if we become poor or if we do not get something. For them, this shame comes when they fail to do their best. But what happens ... their shame is that everything they do; be the best they can be.” (Mahathir, 2018)

During his retirement years (2003-2018), Mahathir never sat still. Although in some cases his comments and advice were ignored by some, he did not stop receiving invitations from within and outside the country to provide insights (advice and guidance) on national leadership and life. In fact, recognition and awards such as Honorary Doctorate are frequently received by him from educational institutions worldwide. Citing his latest quote:

“...for 15 years nonstop, I have been commissioned by the Japanese to teach Japanese teenagers in Fukoka, Japan about Japanese culture. This is because the young Japanese people are still confused.

They see in themselves a completely different culture from the culture that their parents convey.” (Mahathir, 2018)

Mahathir as chief executive to lead a cabinet that is generally new and inexperienced. It poses threats from both the outside and the inside. Mahathir had to guide the cabinet members who previously had the opposition minds to the new mould to run a government. His government may face the threat of a cabinet minister who sabotages his own government due to ignorance, greed and lack of focus. Finally, Mahathir’s cabinet is at risk of losing the trust of the people especially those who voted for them. In this case, paternal guidance is very important.

“Schools exist but are informal, we do not include them in the classroom. But there are efforts to improve their skills through courses held at INTAN (National Institute of Public Administration). We want to tell you what to do and what not to do. How to be the best minister. That’s all we are going to try to convey to them, it’s in our plans,” (Bicara Minda, 2018).

In fact, he has until the writing of this article is said to be still dissatisfied with the achievements and performance of the ministers since they were appointed to hold their respective portfolios despite being quick to learn. Mahathir gave performance cards with values of only 40 to 50 percent in total. According to him;

“I’m never satisfied. If possible, what I want (something that has been directed to do) was done yesterday, not today.” (Utusan Malaysia, 2018)

Mahathir resumed what was delayed in 2003 when he ended his tenure as the 4th Prime Minister. Mahathir strives once again to inculcate the noble values of life among his people. According to him, the instilling can be difficult for adults as they have absorbed the old life values but for children, it should be done as soon as possible. Mahathir took work ethic values to another level when he began to adopt it as a cultural policy. According to Mahathir;

“For our teenage children, they need to be instilled with noble life values so that our country is known as a hard-working nation, not breaking promises and not asking for a higher wage, but rather wait for our high output and quality.” (Mahathir, 2018)

To this day Malaysia still needs “an old man” to lead, guide and advice. What Malaysians need and do not need to do is as detailed by their leadership. At the same time, Mahathir is seen as the most obvious paternalistic leadership in a national context.

6. Conclusion

Mahathir clearly sees leadership in a paternal style. He manages his community like his own children who needs to develop their potential and talents in development. In some cases he felt he was more right than others. All the reasons for his actions are given reasonably and deductively. As a tradition of paternal guidance in the Eastern culture, Mahathir should be respected and the honour is earned. Protecting society has given them little opportunity for society to make their own decisions and has provided developmental action to take. Sometimes people are not given the opportunity to be self-initiated except in actions that are mutually agreed upon. In another perspective they are seen as autocratic with an ego protected by institutions and laws.

As a realistic, pragmatic and “Father Know Best”, Mahathir is deeply concerned about the future of his relatively young community. The people should always defend what they have achieved, that is the independence. In order to defend it, the people are asked not to repeat their old mistakes and to change their competitive attitudes and values without abandoning their own local wisdom framework.

Restoration of democracy is necessary but must be controlled and well controlled. Liberal values themselves must be controlled by returning to positive Asian values. For the sake of the country’s survival, Mahathir chose the best values for his people. Mahathir seems to need to re-evaluate people’s rights in the sense of real needs. The success of the country’s past development proves everything. If he had once led the country towards rapid development with prosperity in all walks of life, he would now have to work on it again with different challenges.

Whether he is liked or hated, adored or pursued, Mahathir is a leader who is given trust again to lead Malaysia. He, as in the past, still believes that better development is possible if he uses his own mould based on local wisdom. Quoting his words for the umpteenth time in front of all civil servant in August 2018; *whether you succeed or fail, depends on your culture.*

This study contains limitations such as not identifying derivative values derived from each identified value dimension. Therefore, future studies need to overcome this limitation so that the values obtained will be more meaningful and more clearly anticipated. Similarly, the trends in each value dimension are not explained in detail. Therefore, future studies are recommended to overcome this limitation because through it, a comprehensive explanation can be obtained regarding the factors of success and failure of a leader in developing the country.

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