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# CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE IN MILITARY LEADERS AND ITS INFLUENCE ON PERFORMANCE THROUGH CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE SCALE

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***ABSTRACT***

**Background:** The existence of strong ethnic factors in Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT) and the diversity of dioceses is the basis that cultural intelligence needs to be applied by all soldiers so they can carry out their duties and to be accepted by society.
**Aim:** This paper aims to determine the cultural intelligence of leaders and explain the urgency of the performance in military organization based on a number of cases in NTT involving the role of the military leadership in solving problems
**Method:** Using a mixed method with a quantitative descriptive approach which was tested on military leaders at Military Resort Command 161 NTT, the data shows that the cultural intelligence measured using the Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS) is dominated by moderate leaders.
**Findings:** In addition, based on the results of statistical tests through correlation-regression tests, it shows that cultural intelligence has a significant effect on leader performance. This shows how urgent cultural intelligence is for soldiers, especially in carrying out their performance directly related to the community. Internal organizational factors that significantly affect the cultural intelligence of leaders are expected to be a reference in making policies or programs that can increase the cultural intelligence of military personnel.

***KEYWORDS***

*CQS, cultural intelligence, leader performance, military leader*

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## INTRODUCTION

Military leaders are part of the national leadership system of a nation and state which also includes civilian leadership in various sectors and military leadership (Brooks & White, 2022; Oksamytna et al., 2021). Military leaders in all units must become warriors with courage and knowledge (Ulmer, 2010). They carry out their duties perfectly by influencing their members, providing direction and goals and motivating their members in their environment to achieve the expected goals (Wirawan, 2013). The characteristics of military leadership include loyalty to military doctrine, integrity, courage, firm, commitment to duties and obligations, selflessness, loyalty, energetic, respect the individual, and empathy (Wirawan, 2013).

Referring to various aspects of leadership studied and researched, there are two very important leadership issues, namely how to acculturate military leadership in areas that have certain characteristics and how leadership can work effectively in organizations in areas with certain local culture (Fisher et al., 2015; Lisak & Harush, 2021; Taras et al., 2013). In addition,

every leader must deal with three important variables: the people they lead, the tasks carried out by these people, and the environment in which they are located (Roche et al., 2020).

An environment with a unique distinctive culture requires dedicated attention (Gazali et al., 2023). A leader in the region must have cultural intelligence and a greater sense of sensitivity (Davis, 2012). This cultural intelligence will be one of the critria for a leader in formulating a policy with a good level of acceptance by the community. The condition of the people who are attached to regional customs and the influence of the diocese in the Military Resort Command 161 area in Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT) demands an effective and flexible leadership model that can be accepted by all groups.

Local culture greatly affects the leaders and soldiers of the Indonesian Air Forces in Military Resort Command 161 NTT. In addition, NTT has challenges of community life that are closely related to local culture, including the diocese. There are seven dioceses in NTT, there are Kupang Archdiocese, Ende Archdiocese, Atambua Diocese, Larantuka Diocese, Maumere Diocese, Weetabula Diocese, and Ruteng Diocese. Among the seven dioceses, the Diocese of Larantuka has the most people of the island of NTT. The people in Larantuka are more obedient to local cultural and diocesan values including ethnicity.

The determination of religious leaders in NTT, community figures, and traditional figures are still quite strong in the life of civil society thus the ideal military leadership must consider the presence of these figures as part of consolidating communication and territorial development as well as to create a harmonious relationship between the army and the community. Realizing a harmonious army-community relationship cannot be done instantly but must be continuously develop early thus making the spirit of defending the country is always maintained.

One way to realize Army-People's Unity is through Territorial Development activities. Unfortunately, the process of adjustment in the different cultural contexts (sociocultural adjustment) faced by military leaders and their members in implementing the leader's performance in a new environment will be more difficult if there are significant cultural differences (Searle & Ward, 1990; Ward & Kennedy, 1999). The existence of a strong ethnic factor in NTT and the diversity of dioceses is the environment in which cultural intelligence must be applied by military leaders in Military Resort Command 161, NTT. Cultural intelligence can influence the leadership model run by military leaders and their members so that it can improve the success of the leader's goal and objectives. Research conducted by Deng and Gibson (2008) explains that global leadership supports and contributes to the metacognitive principles of cultural intelligence in the leadership process.

The example of cultural intelligence's implementation in military leadership at the Military Resort Command 161 was demonstrated in celebrating the Republic of Indonesia's 69$^{th}$ Anniversary with the theme "*Colossal Dance of Fobamora Unite*" it involves 500 people formed by groups according to the name and culture of NTT, while the dances performed are in accordance with regional traditional clothing and describe the diversity of arts and culture of NTT (Hermawan, 2014). With this cultural approach, the level of community acceptance is relatively higher because the community understands the intent and purpose of the presence of the military in carrying out the performance of leaders.

Factors that influence the ability to adapt to different cultures are emotional intelligence, length of time interacting with foreign cultures, and knowledge about culture (Koveshnikov et

al., 2014). This is the basis for the importance of cultural intelligence possessed by military personnel in carrying out their duties with the community. In this way, an analysis of cultural intelligence in military leadership at Military Resort Command 161 NTT is a topic to be elaborated deeply in this paper. Using a mix method approach, this study attempted to describe how high the cultural intelligence possessed by military leaders in NTT while simultaneously analyzing how much influence it has on their performance, as well as supporting and inhibiting factors. The researchers expected that it will contribute to the issue discussed and how it can proceed for future researchers.

## METHOD

The research used quantitative descriptive design which focuses in explanatory research. The data analysis process started from obtained quantitative data through interview. After the quantitative data was obtained, qualitative data was added to deepen and strengthen the results of statistical analysis through in-depth interviews. The subject in this study were military leaders in the Military Resort Command 161 area of NTT. In addition, it was chosen because it has a very strong local culture through determination of religious leaders, community leaders, and traditional leaders. Moreover, NTT has challenges of community life closely related to local culture, including the diocese.

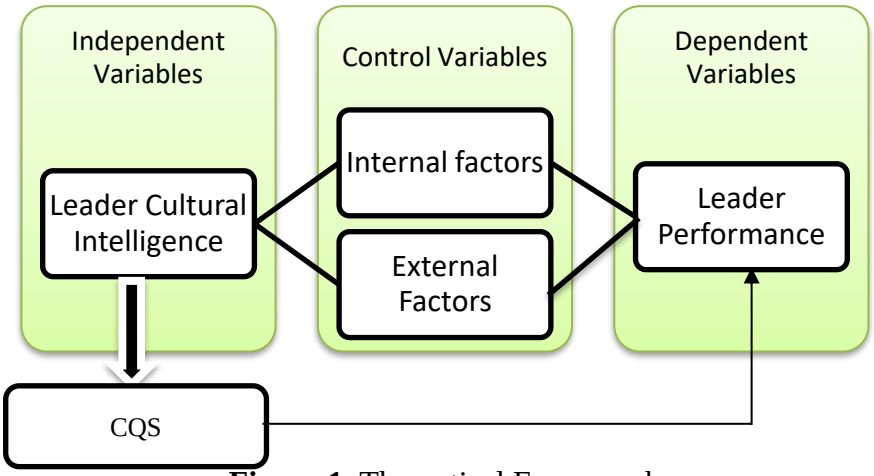


**Figure 1.** Theoretical Framework

The samples were military leaders with a total sample (N) 69 respondents. Data collected tool was conducted using a questionnaire. The type of questionnaire is semantic differential which is a research instrument to measure reactions to stimuli, words, and concepts through scales. This study adopts the second goal from Heise which the output in this study can measure the scale of cultural intelligence in military leadership (Heise, 1970). The data collected from respondents were processed and analyzed using SPSS software, while the results of in-depth interviews with informants were processed through a qualitative descriptive approach.

Cultural intelligence in this paper measured by Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS), a measurement proposed by Ang et al which consists of four CQ factors i.e. metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioral (Ang et al., 2007). In addition, to measuring the level of cultural intelligence of military leaders, this paper also analyzing influence between cultural intelligence between leaders (Independent Variable) on leader performance (Dependent

Variable) as well as the factors that most influence this variable (Figure 1). CQS (Table 1) measurement is done through weighting in SPSS software. Besides, the indicators used in the performance appraisal process depend on the needs of each organization. In this study, military performance can be evaluated using the following five indicators: productivity, service quality, responsiveness, responsibility, and accountability (Aditama & Widowati, 2017; Saputra et al., 2017). However, military performance measurement will not be elaborated further in this study.

**Table 1.** Measurement of the Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS)

| CQ Factor | Questionnaire Items |
|---|---|
| **Metacognitive CQ** | |
| **MC1** | I am conscious of the cultural knowledge I use when interacting with people with different cultural backgrounds |
| **MC2** | I adjust my cultural knowledge as I interact with people from a culture that is unfamiliar to me |
| **MC3** | I am conscious of the cultural knowledge I apply to cross-cultural interactions |
| **MC4** | I check the accuracy of my cultural knowledge as I interact with people from different cultures |
| **Cognitive CQ** | |
| **COG1** | I know the legal and economic systems of other cultures |
| **COG2** | I know the rules (eg, vocabulary, grammar) of other languages |
| **COG3** | I know the cultural values and religious beliefs of other cultures |
| **COG4** | I know the marriage systems of other cultures |
| **COG5** | I know the arts and crafts of other cultures |
| **COG6** | I know the rules for expressing nonverbal behaviors in other cultures |
| **Motivational CQ** | |
| **MOT 1** | I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures |
| **MOT 2** | I am confident that I can socialize with locals in a culture that is unfamiliar to me |
| **MOT 3** | I am sure I can deal with the stresses of adjusting to a culture that is new to me |
| **MOT 4** | I enjoy living in cultures that are unfamiliar to me |
| **MOT 5** | I am confident that I can get accustomed to the shopping conditions in a different culture |
| **Behavioral CQ** | |
| **BEH 1** | I change my verbal behavior (eg, accent, tone) when a cross-cultural interaction requires it |
| **BEH 2** | I use pause and silence differently to suit different cross-cultural situations |
| **BEH 3** | I vary the rate of my speaking when a cross-cultural situation requires it |

| | |
|---|---|
| **BEH 4** | I change my nonverbal behavior when a cross-cultural situation requires it |
| **BEH 5** | I alter my facial expressions when a cross-cultural interaction requires it |

*Source: (Ang et al., 2007)*

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Military Leader's CQ Level

Searle and Ward (1990) explained that the process of adjusting to a new culture and environment is also called self-adjustment in a different cultural context or is called sociocultural adjustment. The theory of cultural intelligence used in this research is Ang et al's theory in his writing in The Cambridge Handbook of Intelligence entitled *Cultural Intelligence*. The cultural intelligence can be measured by Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS). There are four factor models analyzed in cultural intelligence: metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavior (See Table 1) (Ang et al., 2007, 2019).

First, metacognitive CQ shows the mental processes in individuals to acquire and understand cultural knowledge which include thinking control knowledge (Brislin et al., 2006; Triandis, 2006). Second, cognitive CQ shows knowledge of conventions, norms, and practice in different cultures obtaining from personal knowledge and experience (Ang et al., 2006). Third, CQ motivation demonstrates the ability toward functioning and learning directly in some situation that characterized by cultural differences (De & Pritchard, 2006). Fourth, behavioral CQ demonstrates the ability to show appropriate verbal and nonverbal behavior when interacting with people from different cultures (Gudykunst, 1988).

The subject of this paper is the military leader in the territorial area of Military Resort Command 161 NTT. The measurement of cultural intelligence in military leaders using Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS) with four indicators of cultural intelligence i.e. metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioral with each indicator has question items as a measuring tool for cultural intelligence. Based on the results of statistical processing with classification using the standard deviation, the level of cultural intelligence possessed by military leaders at Military Resort Command 161 NTT was divided into three level i.e. good CQ, moderate CQ, and bad CQ. These three classes were obtained through classification results using a standard deviation based on the total value of the questionnaire answered by military leaders. good CQ class is a leader who has a value greater than the standard deviation, medium CQ class is a leader who has a range of values at the standard deviation, and leaders who have a bad CQ are those who have a value below the standard deviation

The data shows that more than 75% of military leaders apparently have cultural intelligence at a moderate level, while only 13% of leaders with good cultural intelligence and the remaining 9% have a poor intelligence scale. This figure needs to be underlined considering the importance of cultural intelligence, especially for TNI AD because it relates to interpersonal skills. Interpersonal skills involve individual expertise in generating, developing, and maintaining social relationships so that both parties experience mutual benefits in the situation (Widyarini, 2014). If it is related to military performance in the OMSP program, the mutually beneficial relationship in question is that the community can accept TNI AD soldiers well and participate in the OMSP program so that the benefits of the OMSP program can be felt by the

community, while TNI AD soldiers can carry out missions well according to the goals achieved. Therefore, in order to improve the cultural intelligence of leaders at Korem 161/Wirasakti, this research will describe more specifically the values of cultural intelligence in each factor.

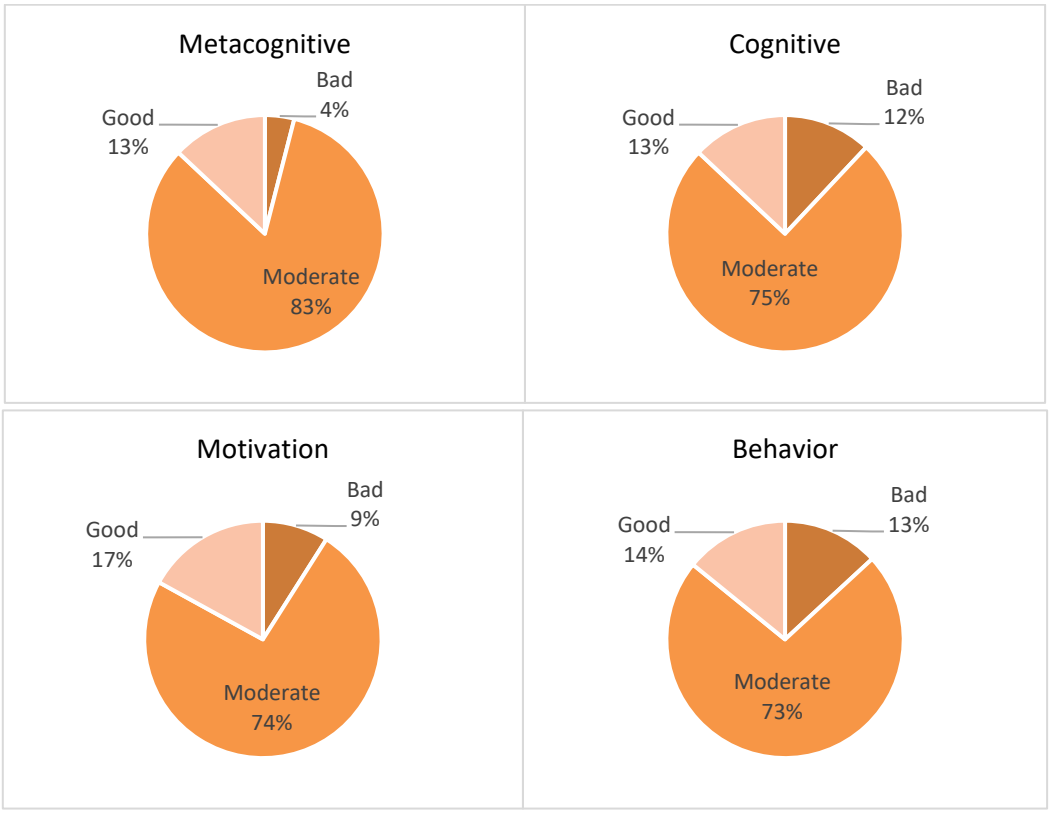


**Figure 2.** Military Leader CQ Level in Each Factors
*Source: Data Analysis, 2023*

**Statistical Results**

The indicators representing the performance of leaders in this paper are related to Military Operations Other Than War which focuses in preventing war, resolving conflicts, seeking peace, and supporting civil administration in overcoming domestic crises. The results of statistical analysis with the Pearson correlation coefficient showed a positive value with a number of 0.869 and a significance of 0.000. Decision making on the Pearson correlation can see the Significance value (Sig.), if the value of Sig. < 0.05 thus there is a significant correlation between the two variables so that because 0.000 < 0.05. How strong the relationship can be known through the correlation coefficient based on the criteria (Guilford, 1956), a correlation coefficient value is 0.869 can be interpreted that the two variables have a very high relationship.

The next question that arises is whether the two variables influence each other? This answer can be answered by testing reggression in SPSS. The significance value is the probability that data occurred by chance because of the value of Sig. CQS is 0.000. The data indicates that the X variable affects the Y variable. The X variable which is the independent variable is cultural intelligence, while the Y variable shows the leader's performance. R Square or $R^2$ is the value showing the percentage contribution of independent variable that influence

dependent variable. The coefficient of determination of 0.756 indicates that 75% of the leader's performance variables can be explained by cultural intelligence variables and the remaining 25% are explained by other variables. Meanwhile, simple regression result in

$$Y = 19.133 + 1.118X \qquad (1)$$

with the interpretation: if there is no cultural intelligence then the leader's performance is 19.133 and if there is an increase in cultural intelligence on a unit scale it will increase the leader's performance by 1.118 on a unit scale.

To predict the factors affecting level of cultural intelligence may be known through the value of the correlation coefficient which indicates which factors have the strongest influence. In this paper, the factors influencing cultural intelligence are divided into two i.e. internal and external organizational factors. Internal organizational factors include organizational management and policies of the military, while external organizational factors include the condition of the community, geographical conditions of the area, and level of conflict. Based on the results of statistical tests, both internal and external factors have a positive relationship with cultural intelligence as evidenced by appearance of positive number in correlation coefficient. Moreover, the significance value of internal factors and external factors is 0.000 which interpretation that if the value of Sig. < 0.05 then there is a correlation between two variables. When compared to the relationship between internal and external factors, the data shows that the internal factor value (.703) is greater than the external factor value (0.622) thus organizational internal factors are considered to be more closely related to cultural intelligence.

**Discussion**

NTT, has a number of cases involving the role of the military leaders in their resolution. The problem that is often faced by organizational leaders is how to find the approach to formulate the right policies thus they can move other people consciously and responsibly carry out the decisions because everyone has different needs and desires (Conkright et al., 2020). An environment that prioritizes local culture and religion requires a leadership model that can embrace traditional leaders and religious leaders so that military leaders provide positive benefits to the civil society. Unfortunately, the process of adjustment in the different cultural contexts (sociocultural adjustment) faced by military leaders and their members in implementing the leader's performance in a new environment are very challenging when society has there are significant culture differences (Searle & Ward, 1990; Ward & Kennedy, 1999). Therefore, the cultural intelligence possessed by this leader is very important. Someone who has cultural intelligence is able to adapt and develop potential effectively in a new cultural context (Ang et al., 2015).

The study found that the cultural intelligence of military leaders in NTT are mostly in moderate level and only 13% had a good CQ level. This cultural intelligence has a significant effect on performance practices in military organizations which cultural intellegence may explain 75% of the variations in a leader's performance. Similarly, Ng and Early (2006) found that cultural intelligence also has significant implications for a diverse global work environment where adaptable workforce is needed.

Brancu et al. (2016) tried to analyze the four aspects of cultural intelligence to determine which aspect has the highest value for business students. Their conclusion is the strategic CQ components for students are the dimensions of motivational CQ and metacognitive CQ which inductive, stimulative, and educational action mechanisms are the most relevant, while the behavioral and cognitive dimensions are considered less relevant because members of the target group have little knowledge about other cultures. In Early & Ang point of view, CQ of motivation is critical CQ and key element in adapting to new cultural environment CQ motivation is needed to direct cross-cultural information towards new cultural actions and experiences (Early & Ang, 2003). Similarly, Templer et al. (2006) argued that CQ motivation is an important individual attribute because it has a strong relationship with cross-cultural adjustments.

Interestingly, the same results also found in this paper which metacognitive CQ and motivational CQ have strong relationship of 0.857 (the closer to 1 the stronger the relationship between variables). This condition indicates that the higher the metacognitive aspect the soldier has, the higher the motivational aspect, while the weakest relationship of all aspects is cognitive CQ and behavioral CQ with a score of 0.473 (the closer to 0, the weaker the relationship). Therefore, to be able to answer the causes of this, qualitative analysis is needed thus the writer conducts in-depth interviews with five leaders about the dimensions of cultural intelligence. Based on the results of qualitative interviews, the cultural intelligence's indicators of leaders can be described as in Table 2.

The results of the descriptive qualitative also explain that there are considered negative in cognitive CQ and behavioral CQ. Even so, the answers considering low by the quantitative will be different when analyzed through a qualitative perspective. Firstly, on cognitive CQ, most of the leaders have not been able to understand the local language in the NTT region. This does not mean that leaders do not want to use the local language, but always try to learn it, even if it is limited to daily language. Secondly, in behavioral CQ, negative answers were also found that the leaders did not change the accent to suit the local culture. According to the leader of the tribe outside the tribe, they are not able to change the accent as a whole, not on purpose but there is an underlying reason which if the change in accent is not in accordance with the wishes of the interlocutor, it is feared that lead to perceptions considering to insult language. Instead of synergizing in activities with the community, there was a conflict over the incompatibility of language accents. In addition, around 51% of leaders have tenure in NTT of less than five years. If a cross-analysis is carried out on the level of cultural intelligence of the leader and how long they stay, it can be concluded that the longer the stay, the better the cultural intelligence of the leader. Thus it can be seen that to be able to use and or understand different cross-cultural languages and accents it takes more than five years. There are several theories about Language Acquisition including Behaviorism Theory (Skinner, 1957), Nativism Theory (Chomsky, 1968), and Cognitivism Theory (Piaget, 1954). In this case the language acquired by the leader is included in Cognitivism Theory where language is acquired based on structures deriamotor cognitive and acquired through interaction with objects or people around them (Chaer, 2009).

Brancu et al considers the weakness of the CQ elements, especially behavioral CQ, due to a lack of direct experience so that behavior patterns that support cultural intelligence have not yet been formed. It is supported in Alon & Higgins' writing that international practical

experience should be included as a way to develop cultural intelligence (Alon & Higgins, 2005). Luckily, the Archipelagic State of the Republic of Indonesia, has a variety of tribes, customs and cultures. We contend that to develop cultural intelligence requires direct experience in a foreign cultural context, military leaders can also visit and interact with various tribes, customs and cultures. in Indonesia.

**Table 2.** Qualitative CQ Elements

| Metacognitive | Cognitive | Motivation | Behaviors |
|---|---|---|---|
| Culture is not something to be debated | Know the local culture | Really enjoy interacting | The logo has not changed completely |
| Culture is a momentum for unifying the nation | Know the economic system of society | Have confidence in interactions | Can divide the opportunity when to speak and be silent |
| Good social interaction and personal communication | Unable to understand the language | Able to solve problems | Change the logo as needed |
| Cultural understanding is very important | Know the wedding traditions of other cultures | Comfortable living with other cultures | Can change non-verbal behavior |
| Interested in understanding other cultures | Understanding of non-verbal expressions only in daily communication | Daily activities carried out as usual | Can change facial expressions |

*Source: Authors, 2023*

However, it should be noted that a person's cultural intelligence ability is influenced by factors. Cultural intelligence as one of the intelligences has different levels in different people. In the previous theory, cultural intelligence is more influenced by individual intelligence factors such as emotional intelligence and social intelligence (Jyoti & Kour, 2017). However, this paper tries to make a novelty in research where the cultural intelligence of leaders can be influenced by organizations. In this case the factors are divided into internal and external factors of the organization. Internal organization factors which include military organizations, military management and organizational policies are more closely related to cultural intelligence than external organizational factors which include geographical conditions, societal conditions, and levels of conflict. If in this paper the internal organizational factors influence cultural intelligence, some experts argue about the influence of cultural intelligence individually. Emotionally intelligent individuals have self-confidence that helps understand with other individuals, maintain proportionate, maintain focus, and are able to understand important things, this phenomenon is positively related to CQ which higher CQ has the ability to deal with confusing situastions (Crowne, 2009; Jyoti & Kour, 2017; Kumar et al., 2008; Moon, 2010).

In the end, this study accepts Ang et al's Cultural Intelligence Theory and its measurement in analyzing cultural intelligence through four elements: metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioral (Ang et al., 2007) where after statistical testing it is demonstrated that all elements are positively related with cultural intelligence. Furthermore, the findings of Ang et al were criticized by Brancu et al where the elements that sufficiently explain cultural intelligence are only metacognitive and motivational elements (Brancu et al., 2016). After statistical testing was carried out again for each element, it turned out that this study also accepted the theory presented by Brancu et al under certain conditions. The certain conditions here are explained through the results of qualitative analysis which cannot be found in quantitative data.

## CONCLUSION

This paper measures the cultural intelligence of military leaders and the urgency for the performance of leaders in Military Resort Command 161, NTT, an area rich in tribes, customs and culture. Through Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS) measurement tool with dimensions metacognitive CQ, cognitive CQ, motivational CQ, and behavioral CQ which have been tested for validity and reliability, the results show that 75% of leader performance is influenced by cultural intelligence. The magnitude of the influence of cultural intelligence on the performance of leaders shows how urgent cultural intelligence is needed by both leaders and military personnel.

Overall, the cultural intelligence of leaders at Military Resort Command 161, NTT, is 78% dominated by leaders with moderate CQ levels. Nonetheless, the results of the qualitative analysis show that the success rate of the leader's performance can be said to be good in terms of the leader's success in carrying out tasks, especially OMSP. However, it would be nice if this condition became a reference in increasing the ability of cultural intelligence by the TNI AD, both leaders and members, in order to achieve better leader performance.

In addition to presenting a new analysis of cultural intelligence, especially in military organizations, this paper also has limitations that are expected to be a reference and learning for further research. It is hoped that further research can model cultural intelligence on military leaders in other areas so that the results of this paper can be compared. In addition, the results of this paper are expected to be a reference in making policies or programs related to increasing cultural intelligence in military organizations. The factors that influence cultural intelligence need to be specified in detail.

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