

Ignasius Jonan: A Leader Requires Talent and Experience

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Not everyone is destined to become a leader. However, in order to be a leader, it is not enough to only rely on their talent, but also experiences. Those were stated by Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources, Ignasius Jonan, during a general lecture on *Executive Series Transformational Leadership* entitled *The Secret to Build High Performance Organization* which was held on Friday (23/2) at Auditorium of Graduate School UGM.

Jonan admitted he had not expected to obtain an opportunity to be a leader. When he was studying overseas, Jonan only fulfilled his father's wish. "My father wanted me to study, but after finishing my study, my father passed away," said Jonan who studied at Columbia and Kennedy School in the United States of America.

For Jonan, becoming a leader cannot be achieved by studying in formal school, it comes from life experiences. "A person can become a decent leader, half of it comes from talent and the rest comes from life experiences. If you do not have talent, then you have to seek for experiences," he added.

If leadership only relies on popularity without talent and experience, it will produce a low work performance. "Being a leader by relying on popularity will always produce bad results," said Jonan.



A decent leader has to be able to become a role model as well as deliver the vision. However, the vision has to be simple and easy to understand by others. “The vision has to be easy to understand by your followers,” he added.

Jonan presented his experiences whilst becoming the Director of PT Kereta Api Indonesia (Indonesia Railways Company) in 2009. At that time, Jonan almost refused to take the job because most of the total number of 26 thousand people graduated from elementary school and junior high school. “From those numbers, only 86 people obtained Bachelor degree. Therefore, I had to deliver my vision toward the workers who were, say 47 years old, and only graduated from elementary school,” he added.

According to Jonan, when leading an organization, he often makes short-term targets which are easy to be done. “Making easy targets with three months deadline will increase the work spirit of the workers. For example, improving and maintaining toilets sanitation as the target for cleaning service and other workers,” said Jonan.

After achieving the target regarding sanitation, according to Jonan, he made a smoking ban policy particularly for the machinist while working. After setting those targets, Jonan said those who graduated from elementary school were able to enhance the company’s service.

In PT Kereta Api Indonesia, according to Jonan, he was used to monitoring each station and he also implemented this habit in the Ministry office. For Jonan, a leader has to have humanity, thus we should not hold a grudge towards everyone, “A leader should not hold a grudge because it can destroy our leadership,” he added.

Aside from giving a general lecture, Jonan also obtained an opportunity to ride an electric rickshaw which was developed by UGM research team led by Dr. Jayan Sentanuhady. Jonan also watched the prototype of the electric car developed by UGM.

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