



The Double-Edged Sword of Charismatic Leaders: Does The Current Organization Still Need Them?

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ABSTRACT

The concepts of charisma and charismatic leaders become the attention of many scholars from various academic disciplines and become a controversial topic due to the double-edge impacts, especially in today's world when the use of Internet of Things (IoT) is widespread through social media. It leads to some questions: 1) do today's businesses and organizations still need a charismatic leader? 2) What are the best practices and traits that charismatic leaders should adopt in today's organization? This paper reviewed these types of leaders and explained the organizational and business roles, the best practices, and the qualities of such leaders. This paper also explained both the advantages and disadvantages of charismatic leaders. The researchers reviewed the best practices and qualities of charismatic leaders based on relevant publications and examples from scholars. The researchers recommended future field research reveal the correlation between charismatic leaders and young audiences in this "social media millennial" era.

Pedang Bermata-Dua Pemimpin Kharismatik: Apakah Organisasi Kekinian Masih Membutuhkan Mereka?

ABSTRAK

Konsep kharisma dan pemimpin kharismatik telah menarik perhatian banyak akademisi dari beragam disiplin ilmu dan sekaligus menjadi topik kontroversi karena bisa berperan menjadi pedang bermata-dua, terutama di dunia saat ini ketika penggunaan Internet of Things (IoT) marak melalui media sosial. Tulisan ini berusaha untuk mengkaji tipe pemimpin kharismatik dan menjelaskan peranan mereka di dalam organisasi dan bisnis kekinian, sekaligus memberikan contoh praktis dan kualitas terbaik mereka, termasuk keunggulan dan kelemahan dari pemimpin jenis ini. Rekomendasi contoh praktis terbaik dan kualitas tipe pemimpin ini didasarkan dari publikasi yang relevan dan juga contoh langsung dari para praktisi. Untuk memahami lebih lanjut kondisi kekinian hubungan antara para pemimpin kharismatik dan pengikutnya dari kalangan milenial, maka peneliti merekomendasikan untuk melakukan riset lapang lebih lanjut yang mengungkap keterkaitan antara pemimpin karismatik dengan para audien muda di era "social media millennial" saat ini.

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The world has many charismatic and influential leaders, starting from legendary political leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, Winston Churchill, and Abraham Lincoln. The world also know some global business leaders, such as Henry Ford, John D. Rockefeller, Sakichi Toyoda, Steve Jobs, and Bill Gates (Oakes, 2010). On the other hand, in the past era, many notorious charismatic leaders ruined countries and businesses on an unimaginable scale, such as Adolf Hitler, Pol Pot, Robert Mugabe, Kenneth Lay, Jeffrey Shilling (Enron scandals), Chuck Conway (Kmart bankruptcy), Bernard Ebbers (Worldcom fraud), and many others.

The concepts of charisma and charismatic leaders attract many scholars from all academic disciplines and have become a never-ending debate about the double-edged impact of such leaders (Conger & Kanungo, 1987, 1998; Conger & Riggio, 2012; House, 1976; Howell & Avolio, 1992; Kaya, 2015; Mhatre & Riggio, 2014; Nadler & Tushman, 1990; Sandberg & Moreman, 2015; Shamir et al., 1994, 1993).

However, the current widespread upheaval of organizations and businesses around the world, and the increased use of the Internet of Things (IoT) through social media, lead to various questions: do today's businesses and organizations still need a charismatic leader? What are the best practices and traits that charismatic leaders should adopt in today's organization?

This article examined the types of leaders and answered the questions. In the first part, the article described the methodology of the study; the definition, concept, and theory of "charisma" and "charismatic" leaders; the double-edged impacts of charismatic leaders based on the benefits and shortcomings of types of leaders; the best practices of charismatic leaders; and the distinctive qualities in today's businesses and societies.

METHODOLOGY

This research based on systematic literature review. The researcher evaluate more than 50 articles published in reputable publisher from year 1976 to 2021 which discuss about charismatic leader and charismatic leadership. The author then examined the definitions shared by the previous journal's authors, analyzed the key concepts, provided the study perspective, and highlighted the critical analyses of existing work, then come up with the conclusion and or recommendation to answer the research questions.

Aveyard et al. (2021) explain that a literature review analyzes and synthesizes the work of a particular area. The area is mostly connected with the research questions to identify the gaps and shortcomings found in the literature works. This research type is useful for critically evaluating the existing evidence and proposing further research (Fragouli, 2018).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Charisma And Charismatics Leaders' Concepts And Definitions

Weber, cited by Sandberg & Moreman (2015) defines "charisma" as a "supernatural" quality. This quality naturally occurs in a specific time of need. House (1976) confirms that the term "charisma" originally meant "gift," to describe leaders who can influence and persuade their followers to excel. Moreover, Kaya (2015) explains that the word "charisma" is derived from the Greek "charis," meaning "grace" and "charizesthai" or "favor." Thus, the word charisma implies a talent or grace from divine power. Charisma was primarily attributed to royal or religious leaders who were believed to possess divinely-bestowed gifts that

enabled their followers to achieve extraordinary feats (Grabo et al., 2017).

Meanwhile, the definition of a charismatic leader is – an individual with special personal characteristics to accumulate and sustain activities within an organization (Nadler & Tushman, 1990). House (1976) explain that charismatic leaders are leaders with wise touching effect on their supporters. Howell & Avolio, (1995) argue that charismatic leaders are always hailed as heroes because they convey a compelling vision of the future and inspire confidence in their followers. Sandberg & Moreman (2015) emphasize that charismatic leaders always invite their followers to become part of a group that gives them a sense of belonging and a purpose in life. In other words, as Sacavém et al. (2017) point out, charismatic leaders are seen as friendly and warm, but also dynamic and influential individuals.

Kaya, (2015) warns of the controversial phenomenon of charismatic leadership. Thus, an individual must perceive the phenomenon ambivalently. The key to the success of charismatic leaders lies solely in the extent to which they are perceived as talented by their followers (Mhatre & Riggio, 2014). If followers do not perceive their leaders as charismatic, the mechanism of charismatic influence breaks down and leaders can no longer exert their influence on followers. Briefly, charismatic leadership works by actively influencing the followers' self-concepts (Shamir et al., 1993).

Consequently, the characteristics of charismatic leadership need to be clarified to achieve future goals successfully. In 1976, Robert House proposed the theory of charismatic leaders by examining nine characteristics of charismatic leadership effects and explaining the three most important characteristics of such leaders. He pointed out that the relationships between leaders and followers played a

greater role. In addition, Conger & Kanungo, (1998) suggested the ethical characteristics that charismatic leaders should possess. Nadler & Tushman (1990) mentioned that charismatic leaders should have three important behaviors, namely vision, i.e., they could create a picture of the future, motivate the members of the organization, and help people achieve challenging goals. More recently, Gilani et al., (2018) and Cocker & Cronin, (2017) argue that charismatic leaders should always build and maintain the best relationships with their followers/supporters by carefully using social media applications, such as YouTube, Twitter, and/or Instagram.

The Controversy Of Charismatic Leaders - Double-Edged Sword Roles

Many scholars have similar ideas about the "double-edged sword" of charismatic leaders' characteristics. They agree with the notion that charismatic leaders bring advantages and disadvantages for both organizations and societies (Clarke, 2016; Conger, 1990; Conger & Kanungo, 1987; Fogarty, 2010; Howell & Avolio, 1995; Nadler & Tushman, 1990; Yukl, 1999, 2010).

Fogarty (2010) clarifies that charismatic leaders have both positive and negative effects on organizations and their members. Yukl (2010) explains the difficulties to distinguish between positive and negative charismatic leaders. He explains that no clear criteria to classify positive or negative charismatic leaders. Thus, the applicable approach should examine the consequences for followers.

Most charismatic leaders have both positive and negative effects on their followers, so disagreement about their relative importance is possible. Clarke (2016) affirms that, like any other trait, the characteristics of charismatic leaders are neither positive nor negative, but depend on

the implementation by both the charismatic individuals and their followers.

The Bright-sides of Charismatic Leaders

Most scholars explain many benefits and advantages of charismatic leaders for organizations and societies as explained in the sub of subsections below (Babcock-Roberson & Strickland, 2010; House, 1976; Michaelis et al., 2009; Shamir et al., 1993; Wu & Wang, 2012; Yukl, 2010):

A movement toward vision and innovation.

These leaders strive for logical change and innovation (Michaelis et al., 2009). Therefore, these individuals will always be looking for ways to improve the organization's processes. This means that the organization can always stay informed about the latest trends in organizational operations. Shamir et al., (1993) explain that leaders create a compelling vision that reinforces collective identity and links the group's mission to abstract values, such as hope and belief in the group's success.

Increase the loyalty of the employees.

Charismatic leaders can be a great way to generate loyalty. These types of leaders are adept at motivating and inspiring employees. They can likely increase employee loyalty and commitment (House, 1976; Wu & Wang, 2012). Their objectives are to make employees feel that their work and talents are important, to improve employee engagement, and to decrease turnover.

The creation of leaders

Charismatic leaders have a contagious personality that can spur oncoming employees to eventually take on leadership roles themselves (Babcock-Roberson & Strickland, 2010). The qualities of these leaders can have a trickle-down effect and become a part of the employees' leadership style.

Higher productivity

These leaders are exceptionally adept at gaining the trust and respect of those they lead (Yukl, 2010). As a result, employees are more likely to adhere to the high expectations of charismatic leaders. These leaders lead to higher productivity and better quality of work by encouraging the employees' motivation, performance, and satisfaction (Shamir et al., 1993).

The Dark-sides of Charismatic Leaders

Some people believe that charismatic leaders are dangerous because they can motivate their followers to do things they would not normally do. DuBrin & Dalglish, (2003) found that some charismatic leaders could be unethical and lead their organizations toward illegal and immoral goals. In addition, Nahavandi, (2003) found that strong charismatic leaders who had a grip on their followers could easily abuse and misused their dominance. Howell & Avolio (1995) also remind us that the danger of charismatic leaders is about their unethical manners, such as using power for personal gain, promoting their vision, insisting on a personal decision, using one-sided communication, and being insensitive to the needs of followers. In summary, the downside of charismatic leaders can be summarized as follows (Conger, 1990; Fogarty, 2010; Gebert et al., 2016; S. Nguyen, 2010; Yukl, 2010):

The creation of the "ok-boss" person

Conger (1990) notes the personality of these leaders can turn admirers into "ok-boss" followers. As a result, a charismatic leader's ideas can go unchallenged, leading to the implementation of plans that are less than beneficial.

False focus, overconfidence, and optimism

Charismatic leadership may have more to do with the individual's personality

and belief system. As coined by Fogarty (2010), the term "personalized charismatic leaders" refers to typically authoritarian. Their goals reflect their interests, while the needs of the organization and its members are manipulated to achieve the leader's interests. Their power to influence others makes them arrogant and overrides humility or compassion. Nguyen (2010) and Yukl (2010) explain that these wrong actions could prevent leaders from recognizing flaws in vision and strategy.

Lack of clarity and loss of followers

Gebert et al. (2016) explain a lack of clarity and loss of followers can occur once the followers have value erosion, leading to a loss of bonding power in leader-follower relationships. When a leader has more successes to show than failures, they may begin to rest on their charismatic abilities and forget to use tactics that are also responsible for the success (Conger, 1990).

The organizational independence (leadership crisis).

A good and effective charismatic leader may have been the backbone of the organization. Their tenacity, drive, and leadership skills may have led many individuals to rely on their skills without developing their own. As a result, leaders' absences may bring void for the untrained organizational members. Conger & Kanungo, (1998), S. Nguyen, (2010), and Yukl, (2010) explain that this problem makes organizations fail to develop a successor, resulting in a leadership crisis for the continuation of the organization in the future.

Promote and provoke a fake dream through social media platform

Since the use of social media, such as YouTube and Instagram, has spread widely, charismatic leaders or so-called role models can unnoticeably promote and provoke a

fake to their followers. This happens especially in religious and entertainment groups. Wieser et al. (2021) explain this phenomenon as a "charismatic entrainment practice of fragility."

Charismatic Leaders Implementation

Does the Current Organization Need a Charismatic Leader?

The proliferation of the Internet of Things (IoT) via social media contributes to the emergence of new charismatic leaders. As a result, the role of charismatic leaders is still needed in a variety of ways for present organizations. Although it cannot be directly applied as a "traditional approach" to "old-fashioned" charismatic leadership theory, as argued by Cocker & Cronin, (2017) and Gilani et al., (2018), the current model of charismatic leaders is even more powerful for follower-leader interactions through the application of social media interfaces, such as YouTube and Instagram. Even today's charismatic leaders can have millions of followers who are always supporting and connecting with them. At the beginning of December 2021, former U.S. President Barack Obama's charismatic leader had nearly 35 million followers on Instagram. The number of followers was twice, that higher than the current U.S. President with only 18 million followers. Another young charismatic leader, the founder of Facebook, Mark Zuckerberg, has around 9 million followers. The legend, the founder of Microsoft Office, Bill Gates, has around 7 million followers. These personalities use their skills, knowledge, and experience to become social media influencers and build a solid following through their social media activities. In other words, they differ from the traditional approach of charismatic leaders because they are more genuine and authentic, providing insights into their personal and everyday activities (Bladow, 2018).

Current Best Practices and Characteristic Traits of Charismatic Leaders

Clarke (2016) asserts to thrive and maintain a leader's position in today's organization. Charismatic leaders need followers who do not only recognize the value of their cause but also fully engage with the presented vision, often resulting in a "them and us" attitude. Therefore, from the perspective of academics and current scholars, it can be suggested that charismatic leaders for today's best practices should possess the following certain characteristics (Bladow, 2018; Blazek, 2015; Cabane, 2011; Clarke, 2016; Cocker & Cronin, 2017; Conger & Kanungo, 1998; Fogarty, 2010; Gilani et al., 2018; Howell & Avolio, 1995; Ito & Bligh, 2016; Levay, 2010; Mhatre & Riggio, 2014; Murphy & Ensher, 2008; Paulsen et al., 2009; Reh et al., 2017; Shamir et al., 1993):

A master communicator

Leaders with the eagerness to perform a more charismatic style should work on their public speaking skills and pay attention to nonverbal cues, such as body language. Howell & Avolio (1995) confirmed that charismatic leaders conveyed a compelling vision and inspire confidence in their followers. These individuals, while not always, are often talented communicators. They are effective public speakers and know how to find the right words to convey a message, whether speaking to one person or even thousands. Clarke, (2016) argues that leaders with charisma are strong communicators. They can easily motivate, inspire, and lead others in the face of challenges and convince people of their ideas and vision. Barack Obama (former U.S. president) is the best example of this charismatic leader because he has superior communication skills in front of his followers. For Indonesia's context, the best example is probably the most popular

Islamic cleric, Ustadz Abdul Somad, known as "the Da'i with millions of followers" (he currently has more than 6 million followers on Instagram).

An active, humble, and honest listener

When allies are dealing with an influential and charismatic leader, they easily become the "ok boss." Leaders should be aware of this and make a conscious effort to encourage their employees to be honest with their ideas and suggestions. Effective charismatic leaders recognize the importance of people's talents and abilities. They listen to their employees' concerns and ideas, understand them and can communicate the value of each employee. These individuals can make employees feel that they are part of a unified team striving for the same goal. Shamir et al. (1993) believe that charismatic leaders achieve their exceptional level of employee motivation by focusing their efforts on building the self-esteem and self-worth of their employees. They accomplish this level by setting high expectations for their followers and having great confidence in the followers' abilities to meet those expectations. Charismatic leaders are skilled at making others feel that their words matter and they employ many dynamic listening techniques: They ask questions, pause before making statements after they answer, and focus on what they are saying without formulating a response (Bladow, 2018). Mark Zuckerberg of Facebook is the best example of a charismatic leader who displays humility in his daily life.

A powerful warmth person

Anyone can be powerful, but it takes a unique type of leader who combines the ability to influence others with compassion and consideration. If you want to become a charismatic leader, you should show that you care about the needs of your employees

and that you do everything you can to encourage them to develop their best personalities. Cabane (2011) asserts that powerful leaders must be as capable of influencing the world around us, whether through influence or authority over others, large amounts of money, expertise, intelligence, sheer physical strength, or high social status. The characteristics of warmth mean benevolence toward others. This character includes kindness, friendliness, helpfulness, generosity, and trustworthiness (Reh et al., 2017). Warm-heartedness is judged exclusively by body language and behavior and directly evaluated than power. Jack Welch, CEO and chairperson of US General Electric for 10 years, is the best example of this type of charismatic leader, as he showed he was capable of running huge companies while also being there for his employees around the world.

A walk-the-talk person.

Be a person who does not just “no actions talking only”, but walks the talk. As mentioned in the disadvantages, charismatic leaders can rely on their personalities. Leaders must not allow arrogance and must remember the value of criticism and sound business analysis procedures. Charismatic leaders are adept at policing themselves (Cocker & Cronin, 2017). They focus on improving themselves, projecting an image that puts them in a good light, and noticing how they differ from others (Conger & Kanungo, 1998). These leaders can rise above themselves and analyze their behavior and interactions for greater impact. Sir Richard Branson of the British company Virgin is the best example of this character, as he regularly demonstrates his leadership skills by directly addressing the complaints of his customers. This action not only will satisfy the customers, but also will inspire the followers.

A strong determined person.

There will be struggles and trials, but these leaders do not think about the possibility of giving up. They believe in pushing forward and facing challenges, and in essence, they are even the driving force for change (Levay, 2010). They also inspire those they lead to do the same. Conger & Kanungo (1998) affirm that charismatic leaders differ from others in that they tend to dominate. They are firmly convinced of their own beliefs and ideals. They feel the need to influence others, and they have high self-confidence. Jack Ma, the founder of Ali Baba, is the best example of this kind of leader because he “never gave up” in a life marked by trials and tribulations.

An Innovative person.

These leaders also see the need to view every challenge as an opportunity to make things better (Fogarty, 2010). They focus on solutions rather than problems and continuous improvement. It is about seeing what could be and then working to create a solution or a future that aligns with that vision by fostering team innovation through supporting a sense of team identity and commitment (Paulsen et al., 2009). The late Steve Jobs is the best example of this type of leader, always-encouraging creativity and innovation in his employees and his company.

A social changer person

These leaders are adaptable and can reassure others regardless of the social situation. Weber (in Mhatre & Riggio, 2014) argues that charismatic leaders are more likely to emerge during times of economic, social, political, and/or other turmoil. He argued that charismatic leaders have the opportunity to use their “divine gifts” in such crises and can lead effectively and successfully. The former head of state of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev, is the best example of this type of charismatic leader

who made the "winds of change" blow not only in today's Russia but in all Eastern and Central European countries.

A Connector

This type of leader often has an emotional sensitivity that strengthens the bonds with people or their followers, especially through social media for current circumstances (Gilani et al., 2018). They go beyond setting goals, performance issues, and objectives to reach people's hearts. Ito & Bligh (2016) found that leaders developed relationships with their followers and improved the attribution of charisma. When leaders reveal their emotions, they provide followers the opportunity to connect with leaders on an emotional level. Followers, in turn, may feel greater psychological safety. Thus, they willingly trust the leader and are motivated to work toward building a more egalitarian relationship between leader and follower. Larry Page, CEO, and co-founder of Google is the best example of this character, as he receives more than 96% approval from his employees and people around the world because he always creates a meaningful connection through the Google platform (Blazek, 2015).

Confidence and empathetic person.

Charismatic leaders are characterized by confidence and a healthy sense of self-worth. This presence also helps charismatic leaders improve their ability to listen. Cabane (2011) confirms that presence simply means being aware of what is happening and not being caught up in an individual's thoughts. This leader demonstrates the sensitivity to the needs of team members. This leader influences the members with techniques to develop mutual sympathy and respect. Murphy & Ensher, (2008) explain that these leaders personally attend to the needs of the followers. Bill Gates, the founder of Microsoft, is the best example of this type of leader, as he allows

his followers to work from home and funds numerous events for his supporters and followers through the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

CONCLUSION AND LIMITATION

In summary, as Oakes (2010) put it, charisma means much more than mere popularity or celebrity. Charisma has existed in all times and places in various forms, even today. It exists wherever there is a human relationship that feels extraordinary or even divine, and it is most pronounced where leadership in a crisis is involved.

Every leadership style has its advantages and disadvantages, including charismatic leadership. However, one valuable aspect of charismatic leadership is presence, influence, and consideration. Leaders who understand the importance of these qualities can become effective and empathetic charismatic leaders. Even in today's environment of the proliferation of social media platforms such as YouTube and Instagram, this type of charismatic leadership is still needed through the application of best practices and certain qualities of their attributes.

However, as this article is based only on the review of numerous publications by scholars on relevant leadership qualities, more in-depth and forward-looking field research needs to be conducted to learn more about the role of such leaders in today's young and "social media millennial" audience. Especially in the field of creative economy, since this industry becoming more important and essential to foster economy of a country (Juariyah, 2015; 2018)

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