

THE IMPACT OF CHARISMATIC LEADERSHIP ON THE ORGANIZATION

Muhaemin Latif

State Islamic University, Alauddin Makassar
Jl. H.M. Yasin Limpo No. 36 Samata, Gowa
Email: muhaeminlatif@gmail.com

Abstract: *This paper is trying to elaborate the concept of charismatic leadership, the characteristics, the role and implication to the organization. It is believed that charismatic leadership has large contribution to the development of organization. It can develop creativity and critical thinking to the followers. However, charismatic leadership also poses negative effect in relation to the followers. The followers are vulnerable in blind fanaticism which leads to self-sacrifice. The leaders are often more arrogance and not aware about social responsibilities. In general, charismatic leadership is a good style among the modes of organization, particularly if it combined with transformational leadership. This is relevant and have been applied at UIN Alauddin Makassar.*

Keywords: *Charismatic Leadership, Organization*

Introduction

The discourse of leadership styles has attracted many scholars from different perspectives to explore and to analyze it critically and analytically. They have strived to formulate the concept of leadership styles which is inherent with the organization. In fact, the implementation of appropriate style of leadership in any organization is difficult. This is true when we look at the definition of leadership as “the concept of leadership itself is likewise an ambiguous one” (Prewitt, 2003). However, I will try to look at charismatic leadership applied in my organization, State Islamic University, Alauddin Makassar. I

assumed that charismatic leadership has significantly changed the structure of the organization, including Islamic organization.

This paper is going to elaborate the concept of charismatic leadership style and the impact to the organization. The writer initially presents organizational setting in terms of the culture and the structure of organization. It will be followed then by overview of leadership theory and description of leadership style implemented in writer's organization. Afterwards, I will also look at the concept of charismatic leadership which covers the characteristics and behaviors, the roles, the strengths and the limitations of charismatic leader. Finally, I then will analyze minute detailed the impact of charismatic leader in my organization, State Islamic University, (UIN Alauddin Makassar).

The Setting of Organization at glance

There is no doubt that the presence of Islamic Higher Education, which is called IAIN (State Institute for Islamic Studies) in the history of tertiary education in Indonesia, has remarkably given a large contribution to develop human resources and to empower society in Indonesia. Historically, the idea of establishing Islamic Higher education has emerged in the colonialism order, which was firstly initiated by Dr Sartiman Wirjosanjoyo who aimed to maintain Moslems reputation in the eye of colonialists and imperialists. This idea was truly formed on July 8, 1946 in Jakarta with the name of Islamic High School (STI). By 1948, STI was developed to Indonesian Islamic University (UII) which situated in Yogyakarta. Afterwards, in order to meet the Moslem needs' toward Islamic Higher Education, the presidents' regulation was officially signed in 1960 regarding the form of State Institute for Islamic Studies (Mudzhar, n.d).

Nowadays, there are 14 IAIN spread in many regions in Indonesia and nine of them have been converted to being universities which, in turn, was called UIN (The State Islamic University) including UIN Alauddin Makassar. All of them are facilitated and funded by the government under the hand of the Department of Religious Affairs (DEPAG). As a result of this conversion, Islamic Higher Education not only focused on Islamic teaching but also concerned with social sciences (Mudzhar, n.d). This change make State Islamic University differ from non-Islamic Universities due to the integration between Islamic values and science on their subjects as non-Islamic Universities did not embrace. They merely concerned on general knowledge.

To put simply, there are a number of vision of UIN Alauddin. Firstly, it provides studies for students regarding religious teaching and scientific knowledge. Secondly, it aims at making UIN Alauddin as the center of research and empowering human resources. Finally, it create UIN Alauddin as the central of Islamic civilization in eastern part of Indonesia and the world in general.

The Nature of Leadership Styles

It has been widely discussed by researchers regarding the term leadership. Leaming (2003) argue that leadership is a complex phenomenon which somewhat difficult to define. It is a concept that is sometimes difficult to understand since there is so much to learn relating to it. A leader is commonly regarded by using different shapes and sizes and leader's approaches may vary. As contended by Ray (1999, p.1) define leadership as "an interaction between two or more members of a group that often involves a structuring or restructuring of the situation and the perception and

expectations of the members.” It is supported by Houser (1993), in comparing managers and leaders, stated that manager are more practical, reasonable and decisive, whereas leaders are more visionary and more flexible. Leadership comes from within. Hence, leadership cannot be taught.

However, leaders can be trained in management skills. Based on these controversies, it can be concluded that the leadership is someone’s ability to lead and to control follower’s behavior to achieve shared goals and visions. This means that leadership is strongly associated with certain behavior that someone owns.

Leadership Style in UIN Alauddin Makassar

A number of leadership styles have been implemented in UIN Alauddin, Makassar. However, the style of leadership really depends on the way of the leaders to lead followers. Since the leaders are elected every four years, the leadership style at the same time changes based on that period. Basically, the styles of leadership which implemented from 1965 to 1999 were the mixture of bureaucratic, autocratic, directive, task oriented and transactional leadership. One example of this issue is the leaders in the very beginning tended to be bureaucratic and quite autocratic. People at the bottom level of organization are difficult to meet and to criticize the top level. Likewise, people at the top level are very rare to come and to see the development of lower level. Consequently, there was sometimes misdirection and miscommunication in running organization.

Furthermore, there were bureaucracies which people should follow when they wanted to do something relating to the organization. A number of stages that must be undertaken by people who have administration problems which is sometimes not

relevant. The organization also experiences directive leadership style in which the followers did not have much time to create innovation and to be more creative since most of the tasks, strategies and policies were decided and guided by the leaders.

The leadership style in UIN Alauddin has been changed significantly since the system of leader election changed as well. It happened in 2000 when the leader then elected directly by the followers which divided into many elements, such as lectures, students and professors not by the members of senate. In this sense, the leader elected has strategic visions, taking risk, anti status quo, and has flexible policies in order to achieve the goals of organization. As an example of this is the leader takes a risk by deciding to provide scientific studies such as medical and health faculty, engineering instead of only Islamic teaching. He builds several networks among the universities surrounding Makassar and even overseas universities. Based on these explanations, it can be concluded that the style of leadership applied in UIN Alauddin is primarily charismatic leadership.

The Concept of Charismatic Leadership

In accordance with Weber (194), charisma is “a certain quality of an individual personality, by virtue of which he or she is set apart from ordinary people and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities”. It indicated that the leaders are not the ordinary persons. Leaders are regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary. In addition, Conger and Kanungo (cited in Dubrin, 2003, p.62) argue that charisma is “a special quality of leaders whose purposes, powers, and extraordinary determination differentiate them from the others.” As studied by Bass (1985), charismatic leaders engage

in impression management to construct an image of competence, increase subordinate competence and subordinate-faith in them as leaders. Bass (1985) argues that charismatic leadership is less likely to emerge or flourish in a transactional culture, and is more likely within a transformational culture. House (1977) called charisma is “image building”. Charisma is dramaturgical, a theatrical role played by a leader that is jointly constructed with followers, as well as by suppliers, competitors, and customers (Gardner and Alvolio, 1998). Gardner and Alvolio pointed out that charismatic leadership is an impression management process enacted theatrically in acts of *framing, scripting, staging* and *performing*.

Tucker and Dow (cited in Richard *et al.*, 2006, p.407) are of the opinion that “charismatic leadership is primarily a function of the leaders’ extraordinary qualities, not the situation.” In this sense, I personally believe that charismatic leadership is not only determined based on personal qualities but followers and situation of the organization as well. In relation to the followers, they regard the charismatic leader as an *omnipotent archetype* (leader as parent), whom they believe will nurture and guide them. Some stated that the followers also view charismatic leader as *mystical* (in touch with “higher truths”), who knows the way and knows the answers. Another thing is charismatic leader is seen as hero who can move mountains (Bast, 1992)

As contended by Yukl (1994, p. 319), most theorists about charisma as the result of the follower perceptions and attribution influenced by actual leader qualities and behavior, by the context of leadership situation, by the individual and collective need of followers.” Hence, Fatt (2000) stated that specific factors which make a leader charismatic in one situation but not so in another vary from people to people and circumstance and to circumstance.

Characteristics and Behavior of Charismatic Leadership

There are many characteristics of charismatic leadership. As stated by Lussier and Achua (2004), charismatic leaders are visionary. They want to transform, not merely maintain. They revive failing companies, develop new products and revolutionize processes (Bass, 1981; Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978; Maslow, 1970). They can propose good vision for the future for the benefit of their organization. (Dubrin, 2003; Javidan and Waldman, 2003; Groves, 2005). The charismatic leaders envision an uplifting future and appeal to values, interests, hopes and dreams. They never lose an opportunity to repeat and share their visions and bring it to life with metaphors, stories, symbols, slogans and examples.

Another important characteristic is “the capability to inspire trust” (Dubrin and Danglish, 2003, p. 68). Charismatic leaders place the responsibility for decisions and management on their followers and teams. They rarely second guess. Charismatic leaders reduce perceived risk by focusing on success rather than failure. Moreover, they provide necessary support and resources. Marjosala and Takala (2000) argue that charismatic leaders are also may take a risk and engage self sacrifice to achieve their vision. This notion can develop the good image of leaders among the followers and good for developing organization as well. Furthermore, as noted by Lussier and Achua (2004), charismatic leaders have high energy and action orientation.

Based on the discussion of characteristics above, it can be concluded that charismatic leaders are visionary, good communication skill, capable of inspire trusting, enable other to act, risk taking, and future orientation. Those characteristics are strongly associated each others. For example, leaders cannot enable others to act without good communication skills. Likewise,

leaders cannot take a risk if they do not have future orientation. For this reason, it is relevant when House stated that charismatic leaders are the ones who are able to instill those characteristics in themselves.

Conger and Kanungo (1998) describe five behavioral attributes of charismatic leaders as follows:

1. Vision and articulation;
2. Sensitivity to the environment;
3. Sensitivity to member needs;
4. Personal risk taking;
5. Performing unconventional behavior.

Musser (1987) noted that charismatic leaders seek to instill both commitment to ideological goals and also devotion to themselves. The extent to which either of these two goals is dominant depends on the underlying motivations and needs of the leader. Charismatic leaders are who can build a group whether it is a political party, a cult or a business team. They often emphasize on making the group very clear and distinct. They will then build the image of the group, particularly in the minds of their followers, as being far superior to all others. Charismatic leaders will typically attach themselves firmly to identify of the group such that to join the group is to become one with the leader.

Based on these explanations above, I argue that the most common behavior of charismatic leaders is performing unconventional behavior. This leads to achieve and to articulate vision easily and deliberately care with the environment and the member needs.

The Role of Charismatic Leadership

Basically, as contended by Sankowsky (1995), the term charisma is value-neutral. It may pose positive or negative direction. Charisma can lead to blind fanaticism in the service of dangerous values or to heroic self-sacrifice in the service of beneficial cause. Sankowsky goes on to state that charismatic leaders have several roles. Firstly, they should develop more creative and critical thinking in their followers. Secondly, they should give opportunities for their followers to develop. Moreover, charismatic leaders should welcome positive and negative feedback from the bottom level in organization. Furthermore, they have to share information with followers and emphasize collective interests of the group, organization and society.

Another important role of charismatic leaders is, as contended by Javidan and Waldman (2003), charismatic leaders are the agents of change who promise better opportunities and better visions to their followers. Therefore, it can be concluded that charismatic leaders play an important role in organization. Charismatic leaders are not easily satisfied with the current condition. Indeed, they try to gain opportunity to transform the organization into better condition and outcomes. It is supported by Conger et al. (2000) describe that charismatic leaders have stronger vision to challenge the status quo. Followers perceive them as a shared and idealized future vision as well as effective articulation of this vision.

The Strength and the Weaknesses of Charismatic Leadership

There are many scholars who have undertaken a research about the effectiveness of charismatic leadership. For example, as

noted by Conger and Kanungo (cited in Conger et al., 2000), charismatic leaders may result in high level sense relationship, strong sense of emotional togetherness to the leader, and high level of followers performance. Likewise, Javidan and Waldman (2003) argued that most of theoretical and empirical research on charismatic leadership indicates positive outcomes, such as delivering high performance, more satisfied and motivated followers, and high effectiveness ratings by followers and superiors. In this sense, it can be inferred that charismatic leaders may pose significant change in their organization since they can improve followers' performance and achieve higher job satisfaction.

However, charismatic leaders may generate negative impact whether to the members or to the organization. As pointed out by Dubrin and Dangelish (2003, p.83), charismatic leaders can be exercised for evil purposes due to term charisma is value-neutral and it does not distinguish between good or moral and evil or immoral charismatic leadership. For example, Stalin, Churchill, Roosevelt and Hitler were all charismatic leaders. For this reason, the followers sometimes follow the leader in blind fanaticism. Similarly, some charismatic leaders ignore social interests (Dubrin and Dangelish, 2003). That is why Howell and Avolio (1992) divide charismatic leadership into two things. They are unethical and ethical. Unethical charismatic leader indicate when the leader uses power only for personal gain or impact and promote own personal vision. They demand that own decision be accepted without question. Furthermore, unethical charismatic leader is insensitive to followers. Therefore, in the writer's point, since charismatic leaders have good communication skills, they can gain personal

vision and hide any illegal behavior within their organization. This, in turn, may harm the followers and organization.

Implication for the Organization

As can be shown in the previous explanation, there are a number of charismatic leadership characteristics applied in UIN Alauddin Makassar. For example, idealized vision, anti status quo, risk taking, unconventional strategies in running organization. Based on those characteristics, I personally believe that leadership style applied in UIN Alauddin is primarily charismatic leadership.

One of the significant changes in UIN Alauddin is the conversion from the institute to university. This is a sort of strategic vision of the UIN leaders. They do not want to maintain the status quo and then negotiate with the government to offer scientific studies instead of Islamic teaching. This, in turn, increases the number of students studying in UIN Alauddin. The leaders also have flexibilities in doing administration affairs. In other word, the leaders change the bureaucratic system more efficient. The followers have more opportunities to criticize the leaders in terms of internal policies. Consequently, the followers feel valued and they strive to do their best to increase their performance for the benefit of organization.

Another important change in UIN Alauddin is the leaders are more open-minded to other organizations such as NGO, or society group and to other universities not only surrounding Makassar but also overseas universities such as United States of America, Netherland, and Australia as well. It is proven when the leaders build network to with International Development Bank to look for funding. Consequently, the leaders can send some lecturer to study overseas. These change leads to satisfy the lecturers and

the students. As contended by Javidan and Waldman (2003). Charismatic leaders may create more satisfaction among their followers since their needs are fulfilled and they feel valued.

Based on the discussion above, UIN Alauddin, in general, has applied charismatic leadership to some extent even though there are few existing leaders in UIN Alauddin still arrogance and only promote their personal vision without considering the others and the organization itself. For this reason, I view that the good leaders who can maintain the good things on behalf organization the members.

Conclusion

Some characteristics of leadership that should be considered are visionary, effective communicator, ability to inspire trust, risk taking, unconventional strategies to achieve vision, high sensitivity to the members and environment. Charismatic leadership generates positive and negative things. In one hand, charismatic leadership can improve and maintain the good image of organization, at the same time, it can make followers in blind fanaticism and finally in self sacrifice. That is why charismatic leaders should consider ethical issues in running organization such as more emphasis on developing followers and aware of member needs.

The implication of charismatic leadership in UIN Alauddin Makassar has significantly changed the structure and the image of this university. People surrounding Makassar encourage their children or their family to study at UIN Alauddin. In other word, UIN Alauddin is getting better than before and more prestigious and qualified. However, it is inevitable that view leaders at UIN Alauddin are still maintaining status quo due to arrogance,

particularly, the old lecturers. This is relevant when Sankar (2003) pointed out that charismatic leaders are vulnerable to extreme narcissism that lead the to promote self-serving. Therefore, I recommend that charismatic leadership mixed with transformational leadership are the appropriate style leadership which can be applied in UIN Alauddin Makassar.

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