

**MEANING FORMATION THROUGH CONTEMPORARY
LEADERSHIP THEORY AND ITS RELEVANCE TO
PESANTREN CULTURE**

**Literature Review on the Book of Organizational
Behavior by Stephen P. Robbins**

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to find out how meaning formation through three contemporary leadership theories and its relevance to pesantren culture by conducting a literature review on Stephen P. Robbins' book. This research uses a qualitative approach to describe things that are not yet clear about the formation of meaning through contemporary theories. The design chosen is a literature review by conducting content analysis on the book Organizational Behavior by Stephen P. Robbins pages 467-475, and is complemented to make comparisons by collecting scientific journals indexed on google scholar with publication age under 10 years to find its relevance to pesantren culture. Finally, after conducting a content analysis of the book Organizational Behavior by Stephen P. Robbins, it can be concluded that the boarding school culture agreed upon and carried

out in the boarding school is a meaning formed through framing with contemporary leadership abilities possessed by a kyai. The three leadership theories include charismatic leadership, transformational leadership, and visionary leadership.

Keywords: *contemporary leadership theory, pesantren culture, organizational behavior, Stephen p. robbins*

INTRODUCTION

Leaders' success as managers in an organization can be measured by how members infer meaning from their behavior in the organization. The meaning here is defined as a result of the process of portraying the message conveyed by a leader. This means that meaning is not the message or the process of delivering the message, but rather how the message is defined by members, with perceptions that will certainly vary depending on the effectiveness of the leader in delivering it and the human resources of the organization's members as the meaning. (Hartono, 2016).

In the phenomenon of communication science each individual will interpret the performance and create its meaning. So meaning is not contained in an event performed by a person, nor through the words conveyed, but meaning is in the people who witness the performance and listen to the words conveyed. (Faules, 1998).

The meaning given to other people, objects, and events, will underlie a person's motivation to take certain actions. This meaning process is produced through messages conveyed by a human when

communicating with others both in the context of interpersonal communication and interpersonal communication and intrapersonal communication in the absorption of personal information of each individual. (Haris & Amalia, 2018).

If individual motivation in the organization is based on the meaning captured by the leader's behavior in the management process, then the managerial style is widely described in several contemporary leadership theories. There are three theories presented by Stephen P. Robbins in his book *Organizational Behavior*; 1). Charismatic leadership theory, 2). Transformational leadership theory, 3). Visionary leadership theory. All three theories describe the appearance of a leader as an individual who uses their words, ideas, and physical presence to command troops. (Robbins, 2006)

The three leadership theories presented by Robbins seem to be found in the leadership style of kyai in Islamic boarding schools. Especially the charismatic model which has the concept of heroic leadership ability or is described as very extraordinary when santri observe certain behaviors of their kyai. (Robbins, 2006, p. 469).. One of the deep-rooted values in traditional pesantren is the culture of ta'dzim towards the kyai, this phenomenon illustrates how santri are very respectful towards their kyai. In fact, every decision and direction conveyed by the kyai to his students is interpreted as a form

of practice that has a certain worship value. (AINUL FITRIANI, 2019; Dakir & Umiarso, 2017)..

The meaning captured through the santri's perception of the message and the leadership style of the kyai can be described as very effective. This is implied in the pesantren culture where it is rare to find students who fail or contradict the message conveyed by the kyai. (FADILAH, 2020). This means that the meaning they capture is in line with the message conveyed, although it cannot be denied that there are some individuals who can be classified as individuals who fail to understand the meaning or deliberately contradict the message.

The phenomenon of pesantren culture underlies the interest in this research, namely to find out how the formation of meaning through three contemporary leadership theories and its relevance to pesantren culture by conducting a literature review on Stephen P. Robbins' book.

METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach to describe unclear things about meaning formation through contemporary theories. (Lexi & M.A., 2010; Somantri, 2005).. The chosen design is a literature review by conducting content analysis on the book Organizational Behavior by Stephen P. Robbins pages 467-475, and is complemented to make comparisons by collecting scientific journals indexed on

google scholar with publication age under 10 years to find their relevance to pesantren culture. (Rijali, 2019).

THE ROLE OF KYAI IN FRAMING THE ISSUE

Robbins begins his discussion of contemporary leadership theory by attempting to define what is called framing. "Framing is a way of using language to manage meaning"(Robbins, 2006, p. 468).. It is described as a leader's method of influencing how an event should be seen and understood by his or her members. This phenomenon is a process of shaping the meaning that one aspect of a particular topic is more important by excluding and negating other aspects. (Prayoga & Mukarromah, 2018).

Is this framing process carried out by the kyai in carrying out his leadership in the boarding school? of course yes. The values and norms that are agreed upon and carried out in the boarding school so that they become a certain culture are the result of this framing. We will describe some case examples to clarify how the definition of framing is.

Call it the culture of ta'dzim towards the kyai as we mentioned in the introductory chapter. This culture is how a santri must be respectful to the kyai which is shown in body language, choosing attitudes, and showing obedience to the values and norms conveyed by the kyai. When a kyai is conveying knowledge in his ta'lim

assembly, the santri's manners are to sit cross-legged and politely while listening carefully and writing in their notebooks. After the santri leave the assembly, the message and knowledge conveyed will be practiced by the santri in their daily lives. (Assirri, 2017; Husaini, 2013; Riskiyah & Muzammil, 2020)..

So what causes santri to obey and agree to practice the manners formed and be able to be *istiqomah* in practicing the knowledge gained so that the value is formed into a culture, none other than because of the framing carried out by the kyai. The norm that respect for the kyai as a scholar and teacher is an order in religion and practicing the knowledge conveyed is a form of worship with a *reward* called *reward*, is *framing* or *framing* to shape the mindset of students. So that the framing can be said to be effective if the santri as objects obey and follow the indoctrinated values. (Pertiwi, 2018; Syafe'i, 2017).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Today's leadership process can be said to be very relevant to the technique of framing the *goals of* an organization, in line with social life which is a picture of the complex problems that occur in it. (Ahmadin, 2013; Suroto et al., 2017).. A leader is present to manage these problems according to his leadership style and concept. (Fatih & Syadzili, 2018).. However, to unify different perceptions in the

organization, often a leader must carry out propaganda to form the same meaning of one aspect at the expense of other aspects. This framing actually subtly and organizedly forces organizational members to agree with the leader's concept. In fact, what is good in the organization is only what is said to be good, and what is bad is what is chosen as bad by the leader. (Syifa, 2021).

The use of language and certain techniques are used by leaders to influence their members' perceptions of events, values, norms, culture and belief in certain causes and effects of not complying. This framing is used by leaders to determine the extent to which problems are noticed, how they are understood, and how actions are taken. So framing is one of the effective techniques for a manager to influence the perceptions and actions of others in describing a reality.

CHARISMATIC LEADERSHIP OF KYAI IN SHAPING PESANTREN CULTURE

The international community describes several western figures as examples of charismatic leaders. John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Jr, Steve Jobs. Bill Gates are individuals who are described as having these abilities. What are their abilities?

To classify what competencies a leader must have in order to be classified as a charismatic leader, it is better to refer to Robbins' opinion which describes that charismatic leadership occurs when

"followers are triggered by heroic or extraordinary leadership abilities when they observe certain behaviors of their leaders."(Robbins, 2006, p. 469)..

Are there any figures in Indonesia who fall into the category of charismatic leaders? Of course there are, just mention Soekarno, Bung Hatta, General Sudirman, and a number of national heroes proven in history that they are heroic figures who are extraordinary in their struggle and dedication to this nation. Meanwhile, in the world of education, the characteristics of charismatic leaders in Indonesia are still dominated by the leadership model of kyai in traditional Islamic boarding schools. (Qori, 2017).

How can kyai in Islamic boarding schools be considered a charismatic leader and have a dominant influence in shaping a culture? At least this can be proven through four stages.

This process can be exemplified when a kyai conveys the vision of the boarding school to his students. It is possible that this vision is initially not very attractive to santri, but through certain framing that is sometimes not designed, but only based on inherent religious values and norms, finally the santri will link it with better conditions in the future (Ajan et al., 2018; Safi'i, 2020). (Ajan et al., 2018; Safi'i, 2020)..

Then usually the kyai will convey expectations of maximum performance and instill confidence that the santri will be able to achieve these expectations. This will usually raise the self-esteem and

confidence of the students because they feel included in the achievement process in which the kyai is involved. Furthermore, a kyai will deliver through advice and actions some concepts of values and norms that need to be done while modeling them in his daily life so that they can be emulated by his students. (Nuruzzaman, 2017; Suyanta, 2020).. And in the end, a charismatic kyai will sacrifice himself to directly engage in behavior that shows his courage and confidence in the vision he initiated.

In this process, why did the kyai become charismatic, of course, because the kyai is not only a conceptualizer who brings up ideas and ideas. But as a religious leader, he instills confidence in the success of the concept and at the same time becomes the first person to apply it in every aspect of his life and performance. This will form a heroic and extraordinary perception of all the santri he educates, then every message conveyed will get a positive meaning and will be applied continuously and formed into a pesantren culture. (Rizqiah, 2016; SARIFUDIN, 2018).

Can charismatic leadership style be learned? Or is it just a talent that is carried from birth by certain individuals? If this question is addressed to the kyai who continues the leadership of his parents who are also kyai, it could be that this leadership concept is a talent or hereditary heritage. But some management science experts argue that this charismatic leadership style is a theory that can be trained and

learned by everyone. Because basically not all kyai have charismatic leadership characteristics, especially the emergence of the phenomenon of kyai in politics, which is considered by some people to have gone out of their realm as educators and scholars who unite the nation. (Adi & Muhtadi, 2017; Syahid, 2021)..

KYAI AS A TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADER

Transformational leaders are defined by Robbins as "leaders who inspire followers to transcend their self-interest and who are able to have a profound and extraordinary impact on followers." (Robbins, 2006, p. 472). Leaders in this category have at least four characteristics. The first is having high charisma that is demonstrated by a valuable vision and mission, can instill pride in its followers, and gain unlimited respect and trust. Second, inspirational; the leader is able to communicate a high organizational purpose, use symbols so that followers can focus on their efforts, and can describe very important meanings in a simple way. third is able to provide intellectual stimulus by encouraging rationality, intelligence, and careful *problem solving*. The last one is having individualized consideration by giving personal attention, providing personal service to its members, training and providing advice. (Fanani et al., 2020; Perdana & Kadri, 2019)..

How is a kyai classified as a transformational leader? The phenomenon of devotion by santri to the boarding school is a small

example of how their personal interests are put on the back burner, and choose to prioritize the interests of the boarding school with the values that have been instilled by the kyai before. It is considered to exceed personal interests because the service will be financially detrimental when compared to choosing activities outside the boarding school. (Atsniyah & Supradewi, 2020; Sa'diyah, 2015)..

Kyai is able to win the respect and trust of the students and the community because he has the four characteristics of transformational leaders mentioned above, namely charisma, inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. With the ability of transformational leadership, the pesantren culture will be formed with the values and norms instilled by the kyai. (Muhibah, 2016).

VISIONARY LEADERSHIP OF KYAI

The discussion of vision always comes up when we discuss the concept of leadership, but it is important to note that not all leaders have visionary abilities. Robbins calls visionary leadership "the ability to create and articulate a realistic, credible and compelling vision of an organization's future that is growing and improving compared to the present."(Robbins, 2006, p. 473)..

In some definitions, it is argued that vision cannot be synonymous with setting the overall direction and goals of the organization. A vision has a clear concept and creates drive, by

offering innovative concepts to improve the shortcomings that exist in the organization, through positive traditions associated with the selection of actions to be taken to realize organizational goals. (Sihite & Saleh, 2019).

The quality of the kyai as a visionary leader is described by three characteristics that correlate with his visionary role in the pesantren. (Asmuni, 2016; Hendrawan et al., 2021). The first is the ability of the kyai to explain the vision he initiated, this ability will affect the meaning perceived by santri. It is possible that students get the wrong perception of the message conveyed, and have an effect on wrong actions, due to ineffective communication. The second skill is the kyai's ability to express the vision through examples of real leadership behavior, not just in verbal forms such as advice and taushiyah. Because the behavior of the kyai who is a *role model* will always be monitored by the students to always be imitated and applied in their daily lives. (Choeroni, 2019). Third, the kyai's ability to expand the vision into all aspects of activities in the boarding school. (Zuhri, 2018). When the vision is able to be absorbed and applied in every boarding school activity, it will turn into a boarding school culture as expected by a kyai as a visionary leader.

CONCLUSIONS

Finally, after conducting a *content analysis of* the book *Organizational Behavior* by Stephen P. Robbins, it can be concluded

that the boarding school culture agreed upon and carried out in the boarding school is a meaning formed through framing with contemporary leadership abilities possessed by a kyai. The three leadership theories include charismatic leadership, transformational leadership, and visionary leadership.

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