

# Charismatic Leadership in Educational Leader: A Field Study in an Integrated Islamic Kindergarten

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**Abstract** — *The aim of this article is to describe charismatic leadership in accordance with the principal of the Integrated Islamic Kindergarten of Al-Wasillah. This research used a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. A field study was used to collect the data, which consisted of observation, interview, and documentation. The interview items consist of 11 main questions related to the dimensions, behaviors, and characteristics of a charismatic leader. The results of this study state that the principal implements charismatic leadership. The principal fulfills 4 of the 5 dimensions, 4 of the 6 behaviors, and 9 characteristics of charismatic leadership. With a charismatic leader profile, TKIT Al-Wasillah was experiencing rapid progress. Other findings state that the principal was a servant leader and applied democratic principles in decision-making. In order to obtain more comprehensive results, further research should be carried out by considering other leadership variables and adding other data, such as interviews with teachers, parents, and others..*

**Keywords:** *Charismatic leadership, Kindergarten, Principal.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Leadership is one of the social problems in schools because it involves interaction that occurs to achieve goals by influencing, persuading, motivating, and coordinating [1]. Currently, educational leadership problems show complexity in terms of educational management components as well as the environment that influences the sustainability of education. (Hayati et al., 2023). However, this leadership is still always offered as a solution for a lot of problems in educational organizations.

Leadership is an important factor because the success or failure of an educational institution is determined by the leaders [3]. The result of study state that the work performance of the teachers was greatly influenced by a good leader [4]. Another research also states that an effective school principal was a guarantee of the development and advancement of a school or institution [5]. Educational leaders have distinctive characteristics compared to leaders in other organizations [6]. One typical type of leadership that can be applied in education is a charismatic leadership.

Charismatic leadership is the attitude of a leader who has strong personal qualities and has an extraordinary effect on his followers by having a social power orientation by emphasizing the internalization of values rather than personal identification, the leader belief that

individuals have to achieve extraordinary performance [7]. Charismatic leadership, in simple terms, is the ability to use strengths or privileges in personality traits to influence the thoughts, feelings, and behavior of members so that members internally admire and glorify the leader's behavior and are willing to do something as instructed [8]. Charismatic leadership states that followers make attributions of heroic or extraordinary leader abilities when they observe certain behaviors [9]. Thus, charismatic leadership has many followers (Hayati et al., 2023) [11].

The charisma and authority possessed by a leader will generate respect, obedience, and reticence from group members towards the leader [12]. This charisma is a skill that can be learned as a result of developing certain behaviors, which are proven to not only increase the feelings and trust of others, but will also help other people change their behaviors and achieve success in the future [13]. Charismatic leaders are able to directly influence group performance through the leader's sensitivity to the environment, and another small part is influenced by the leader's efforts in formulating his or her vision and strategy [14]. Charismatic leaders inspire their followers by implementing their self-concept through communicating higher expectations and increasing followers' self-confidence to achieve better results[15].

According to [16] there are five dimensions of charismatic leadership, consisting of (1) sensitivity to the environment, (2) strategic vision and articulation, (3) sensitivity to members' needs, (4) personal risk, and (5) unconventional behavior. Another result come from [17] that state a charismatic leader has behaviors that consist of (1) having competencies, (2) emphasizing ideological goals related to organizational goals based on values and aspirations, (3) having an attractive vision of the future, (4) providing examples of behavior for members to follow, (5) communicating the hopes and giving the trust to their members, and (6) creating motivation to achieve group goals. In addition, the latest study proposed by [18] shows nine characteristics of charismatic leaders: being visionary, creative, having a strong personality, humility, being a risk-taker, being a great communicator, self-monitoring, being an agent of change, and never giving up.

In its application in schools, charismatic leaders had a positive impact on individual behavior in an organization [19]. The results of the study state that charismatic

leadership had a significant positive impact on employee and teacher motivation [20]. Another study states that teacher work motivation was greatly influenced by the charismatic leader principal [21]. Other results suggest that charismatic leadership influenced teacher innovation in learning [7]. Another study states that there was a significant influence between charismatic leaders in improving the performance of teachers in schools [7]. However, the research on charismatic leaders in kindergarten units is very limited. Therefore, the authors are very interested in conducting field study with the title "Charismatic Leadership in Educational Leaders: A Field Study in an Integrated Islamic Kindergarten". This research will provide information whether educational leadership practices in the kindergarten unit are well implemented or not.

## II. METHODOLOGY

This study was used descriptive method with qualitative approach. Field study was used for collecting the data that consist of observation, interview, and documentation. Observations was used by directly observing the school's daily activities, environments, facilities, and written documents that related to this research. The interview was conducted with 11 major questions that were in line with charismatic leadership theory that consist of dimension, behavior, and characteristics. The interviewee was the principal of Integrated Islamic Kindergarten Al-Wasiilah Tasikmalaya (TKIT Al-Wasiilah). The last was documentation that was used to provide information and evidence, such as activity figures, interview recordings, and other documentation using tools such as a handphone and laptop.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Based on the charismatic leadership dimensions by (Conger & Kanungo, 1998)

Table 1 The Implementation of Charismatic Leadership Dimension

| Dimensions                        | Implementation  |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Sensitivity to the Environment    | Implemented     |
| Strategic Vision and Articulation | Implemented     |
| Sensitivity to Members' Needs     | Implemented     |
| Personal Risk                     | Implemented     |
| Unconventional Behavior           | Not Implemented |

Based on the dimensions of charismatic leadership according to [16], the Principal has concern for the **sensitivity to the environment**, which was manifested by the existence of three organizational problems and how she solves them. First, the principal maximally allocated the Educational Operational Funds (*BOP*) for basic school needs. The financial allocation was stable because there was collaboration between Management Yayasan and the principal. Second, the principal

provided skills training for teaching staff and provided full assistance for one year to give teaching staff more teaching experience. Third, the lack of room for classes could be resolved by creating temporary semi-permanent classes.

Based on the finding, the principal had the **strategy and articulation of a vision** [16], which consists of always emphasizing that the implementation of teaching and learning activities should be in line with school vision; the evaluation meetings were held every Friday to see the accordance of learning activities with school vision and curriculum; the tasks were given by the principal with the legal policy and were easy to understand; and the tasks from the principal were always accepted by the teachers. She also has **sensitivity to members' needs**, which was proven by always providing educational skills, being sensitive to the feelings of teachers, and providing self-reflection for each teacher. Another finding for the interview state that the principal has a **personal risk**, which was proven by bearing the costs for organizational needs and engaging in self-sacrifice to achieve the vision. Last dimension, the principal was **not implemented unconventional behavior** because her leadership style was relatively the same as that of other school principals, but she emphasized fulfilling all aspects of administration. Apart from that, the innovations that the principal made have not yet been realized.

2. Based on the charismatic leadership characteristics proposed by (Yulk, 1999)

Table 2 The Implementation of Charismatic Leadership Behavior

| Behaviors                                                                                      | Implementation  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Having competencies.                                                                           | Implemented     |
| Emphasizing ideological goals related to organizational goals based on values and aspirations. | Implemented     |
| Having an attractive vision of the future.                                                     | Not Implemented |
| Providing examples of behavior for members to follow.                                          | Not Implemented |
| Communicating the hopes and giving the trust to their members.                                 | Implemented     |
| Creating motivation to achieve group goals.                                                    | Implemented     |

Based on the charismatic leadership behavior by [17], the school principal had 4 of the 6 behaviors. The principal was the person who **had the competencies**. She had been in Kindergarten for more than 30 years. She also emphasized **ideological goals related to organizational goals based on values and aspirations**. She always accepted the aspirations of the teachers, parents, Yayasan, and others. The principal always gave instructions or tasks with legal information. Based on the interview, she didn't have **an attractive vision of the**

future and providing examples of behavior for members to follow. The principal just strengthened the vision that had been made before by Yayasan, and she was still unable to reach the learning innovations. Also, the future planning of the kindergarten was still not unreal. On the other hand, the principal tried to give a great example for the teacher, but in reality, she was still not an ideal one because sometimes she arrived lately at the school.

The principal has the behavior of **communicating hopes and giving trust to their members** [17]. The evidence was that she gave trust to the teacher's performance and made it easy to communicate with others. She also met the behavior of **creating motivation to achieve group goals**. She always did the self-reflections for all teachers, which resulted in the values of loyalty and one vision. The principal always gave complex tasks, challenges, initiative, and risk so the teacher could become more responsible and diligent. The result of this behavior was the kindergarten that she led, becoming the only kindergarten in Cibereum sub-district Tasikmalaya with A accreditation and one of the most successful schools.

3. Based on the charismatic leadership characteristics proposed by (Firdaus at all, 2023)

Table 3 The Implementation of Charismatic Leadership characteristics

| Characteristics    | Implementation |
|--------------------|----------------|
| Visionary          | Implemented    |
| Creative           | Implemented    |
| Strong personality | Implemented    |
| Humility           | Implemented    |
| Risk-taker         | Implemented    |
| Great communicator | Implemented    |
| Self-monitoring    | Implemented    |
| Agent of change    | Implemented    |
| Never give up      | Implemented    |

Based on the charismatic leadership characteristics proposed by [18], the school principal had all of charismatic leadership characteristics. The principle meets all the criteria. Start as a **visionary**; the principal planned the future of the kindergarten with her imagination but still did not realize it one by one. **Creative**; the principal had creative thinking and accepted the challenges of accreditation despite the kindergarten having only been established for three years. Because of her creative thinking, this challenge has changed into an opportunity to be a great kindergartener with high educational quality. **Strong personality**; the principal had a strategy in delivering the task, so the teacher could easily accept it. In addition, the principal focused on the school administration. **Humility**; she served anything that had a connection with the kindergarten, and she also gave more attention to the teacher's feelings. **Risk-taker**; which proved by the financial problem in kindergarten and the way she solved it. **Great communicator**;

proven by all the instructions easily understood by the teacher. **Self-monitoring**; the principal always increased her personal ability becoming better. **Agent of change**; she was able to change the stigma of a new school, cannot easily get A accreditation and prove that the kindergarten that she led was one of the best quality of education in Tasikmalaya. **Never give up**; this was the first time in her life as a principal after more than 30 years as a teacher. She realized that she had a lot of weaknesses, but she tried her best to make kindergarten becoming the most successful one.

Another result found that the principal was viewed as a servant leader who served all aspects that had connections in the kindergarten, including Yayasan, teacher, parents, students, and others. She also always implemented democratic principles in making decisions

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The principal fulfils three of the four dimensions of charismatic leader according to conger. The dimensions consist of sensitivity to the environment which proved by there were three organizational problem and its solutions. Having strategic vision and articulation which proved by there were regularly evaluation meeting, the tasks were given by the principal with the legal policy and were easy to understand, and the tasks were always accepted by the teachers. Sensitivity to members' needs which was proven by always providing educational skills, being sensitive to the feelings of teachers, and providing self-reflection for each teacher. Personal risk, which was proven by bearing the costs for kindergarten need but was not implemented unconventional behavior because the innovations have not yet been realized.

The principal fulfils four of the six charismatic behaviors from [17] that consist of having competencies, emphasizing ideological goals related to organizational goals based on values and aspirations, communicating the hopes and giving the trust to their members, and creating motivation to achieve group goals. The principal also fulfils all of the charismatic leadership by [18] which consist of visionary, creative, strong personality, humility, risk-taker, great communicator, self-monitoring, agent of change, and never give up. Another result found that the principal was viewed as a servant leader who served all aspects that had connections in the kindergarten, including Yayasan, teacher, parents, students, and others. She also always implemented democratic principles in making decisions.

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