

Characteristics of Charismatic Leaders and Their Impact on Work Culture

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Abstract:

Leadership plays a strategic role in shaping organizational work culture; however, not all leadership styles are capable of creating a strong and sustainable work culture. One common issue that often arises is the dependence of work culture on a leader's figure without the institutionalization of clear values. Charismatic leadership is often considered effective, yet there is still debate regarding its impact on organizational work culture. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the characteristics of charismatic leaders and their impact on organizational work culture based on a literature review. This study employs a qualitative method using a library research approach. Data were collected through a review of books, scholarly journals, and relevant publications discussing charismatic leadership and work culture. Data analysis techniques included content analysis and qualitative descriptive analysis. The findings indicate that the characteristics of charismatic leaders such as a clear vision, moral integrity, inspirational communication, empathy, and emotional intelligence play a role in building trust and employees' emotional attachment. This trust encourages the internalization of leadership values that shape a visionary and adaptive work culture. In conclusion, charismatic leadership has a significant influence on organizational work culture; however, it needs to be balanced with strong organizational systems to ensure the sustainable development of work culture.

Keyword: *charismatic leadership, work culture, trust, organization*

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is one of the key factors in determining the success of an organization (Cahyati & Adelia, 2024; Firdausi, 2025; Sahadi, Taufiq, & Wardani, 2020). A leader not only plays a role in decision-making but also in shaping the values, norms, and behaviors of organizational members (Fitriyana, Assayuti,

Laia, Salbiah, & others, 2024; Subni & others, 2024; Suprayitno, 2025). In modern organizations, leadership is required to be able to respond to rapid and complex changes (Munif, 2025; Shufutinsky, DePorres, Long, & Sibel, 2020; Uhl-Bien, 2021). Therefore, an effective leadership style has become a primary necessity for organizations to remain competitive. One leadership style that has received considerable attention is charismatic leadership. Charismatic leadership is viewed as having the ability to exert strong emotional influence on followers (Grabo, Spisak, & van Vugt, 2017; Sy, Horton, & Riggio, 2018). This influence is often reflected in employees' attitudes, loyalty, and work enthusiasm.

Charismatic leaders are known for their strong personal appeal, clear vision, and inspirational communication skills (Grabo et al., 2017; Nikoloski, 2015). These characteristics enable leaders to build high levels of trust and commitment among their followers (Norman, Avey, Larson, & Hughes, 2020; Purwani Setyaningrum, Setiawan, Wirawan Irawanto, & others, 2020). In practice, charismatic leadership is often associated with the ability to drive change and unite organizational members. Work culture within an organization is strongly influenced by the values instilled by its leaders. These values gradually develop into shared habits and behavioral patterns. Therefore, the characteristics of charismatic leaders have the potential to shape a strong and positive work culture. A positive work culture ultimately contributes to improved organizational performance and effectiveness.

Although charismatic leadership offers many advantages, not all organizations are able to utilize it optimally. In some cases, a leader's charisma is not accompanied by the development of a healthy work culture. Overly dominant leaders may create excessive dependence among subordinates. This condition can hinder employee participation, creativity, and initiative. Furthermore, the resulting work culture may become highly personalistic and lack sustainability. When such leaders are no longer in their positions, the established work culture may deteriorate. This issue indicates that the characteristics of charismatic

leadership need to be examined more deeply in relation to work culture.

The study conducted by Özgenel shows that charismatic leadership of school principals has a significant positive relationship with various dimensions of school culture such as success culture, support culture, mission culture, and bureaucratic culture and is able to predict the formation of these cultural dimensions (Ozgenel, 2020). The study conducted by Nugraha found that transformational, transactional, and charismatic leadership styles influence Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB), with work culture functioning as an intervening factor shaping employees' extra-role behavior. The results indicate that leadership patterns and employees' work culture are interconnected in promoting OCB, highlighting the importance of leadership approaches in strengthening positive organizational behavior among civil servants(Nugraha, 2021).

The study conducted by Ekmekcioglu, Aydintan, and Celebi found that several behavioral dimensions of charismatic leadership such as strategic vision, articulation ability, and sensitivity to environmental and team members' needs have a significant positive effect on coordinated teamwork. The findings also indicate that not all charismatic traits contribute equally, as leaders' personal risk-taking and unconventional behaviors showed no significant impact on teamwork coordination, highlighting the importance of specific leadership behaviors in fostering effective team collaboration(Ekmekcioglu, Aydintan, & Celebi, 2018). The study conducted by Nugroho et al. found that charismatic leadership, work environment, and organizational culture each have a positive and significant effect on employee performance at the Bangkalan Pratama Tax Service Office. The findings also show that these variables simultaneously influence performance, indicating that the effective implementation of leadership practices, supportive environments, and strong organizational culture contributes to improving employee outcomes(Nugroho, Rahayu, Fitrianty, & others, 2025).

Based on the review of previous studies, research gaps still exist regarding

the characteristics of charismatic leadership and their impact on work culture. Most studies focus on end results such as performance or job satisfaction. Research that specifically examines charismatic leadership characteristics as a process of work culture formation remains relatively limited. In addition, local organizational contexts often receive insufficient attention in leadership studies. Each organization has distinct cultural characteristics and values. Therefore, research that examines charismatic leadership within specific organizational contexts is necessary. The novelty of this study lies in its in-depth analysis of the relationship between charismatic leadership characteristics and organizational work culture.

This study aims to analyze the characteristics of charismatic leaders and their impact on work culture. It is expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the role of charismatic leadership within organizations. In addition, this study seeks to identify leadership characteristics that have the greatest influence on the formation of work culture. The findings are expected to serve as a basis for organizations in developing effective leadership styles. This research is also expected to contribute theoretically to leadership and organizational culture studies. Practically, the results may serve as a reference for leaders in building a positive and sustainable work culture. Thus, charismatic leadership can be optimally utilized to enhance organizational effectiveness.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research design using a library research approach (Chand, 2025; Tisdell, Merriam, & Stuckey-Peyrot, 2025). The library research was conducted by reviewing various written sources relevant to the topic of charismatic leadership and work culture (Conger & Kanungo, 1998). The data sources include textbooks, national and international scholarly journals, conference proceedings, and research reports related to leadership and organizational culture. This approach was chosen to obtain a comprehensive conceptual and theoretical understanding of the characteristics of charismatic

leaders. This study does not involve direct field data collection. Therefore, all analyzed data are derived from credible and accountable literature. The research design aims to develop a conceptual framework based on theoretical studies and findings from previous research.

The population of this study consists of all scholarly literature discussing charismatic leadership and organizational work culture. The research sample was determined purposively by selecting relevant, up-to-date sources that are directly related to the focus of the study. The selection criteria include scholarly publications that address the characteristics of charismatic leaders, their impact on work culture, and organizational contexts. Data collection was carried out through searches of academic journal databases, digital libraries, and other reliable literature sources. The research instrument used was a document analysis sheet designed to record concepts, findings, and conclusions from each source. The collected data were then classified according to the research themes. This process was conducted systematically to ensure consistency and accuracy in the analysis.

The data analysis techniques employed were content analysis and qualitative descriptive analysis (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Kleinheksel, Rockich-Winston, Tawfik, & Wyatt, 2020). Content analysis was used to identify concepts, patterns, and relationships between the characteristics of charismatic leaders and work culture as found in the literature. Subsequently, the data were analyzed descriptively to explain the research findings in a systematic and in-depth manner. The analysis process involved data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The researcher compared various perspectives and findings from previous studies to identify similarities and differences. The results of the analysis were then synthesized into conclusions that address the research objectives. Through these analysis techniques, this study is expected to provide a comprehensive and well-argued understanding of the topic under investigation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

A. Main Characteristics of a Charismatic Leader

Charismatic leaders are described in various bodies of literature as individuals who possess strong personal appeal (Sy et al., 2018). This appeal does not merely stem from formal authority, but rather from the leader's personality and behavior. Charismatic leaders are able to build trust through consistency between their words and actions. The clarity of vision they possess stands out as one of their most prominent characteristics. This vision is communicated to followers in a convincing and inspiring manner. As a result, followers feel that they have clear direction and purpose in their work. Thus, a leader's charisma emerges from a combination of integrity, vision, and interpersonal competence.

Another characteristic of charismatic leaders is their effective and persuasive communication ability. Charismatic leaders are able to convey messages using language that is simple yet meaningful. This communication style enables leaders to build emotional connections with their followers. Such emotional connections foster a sense of closeness and involvement within the organization. In addition, charismatic leaders often demonstrate empathy toward the needs and feelings of their subordinates. This empathetic attitude strengthens employees' trust and loyalty. Therefore, communication becomes a key instrument in developing charismatic leadership.

The literature also indicates that the courage to take risks is a defining trait of charismatic leaders. Charismatic leaders do not hesitate to face challenges and change. This courage provides a tangible example for employees to adopt a proactive attitude. Charismatic leaders are able to display high levels of self-confidence in difficult situations. This confidence spreads to organizational members and enhances collective self-confidence. In this context, leaders serve as a source of inspiration. Such inspiration reinforces the

leader's role in shaping a dynamic work culture.

In addition to courage, charismatic leaders also possess strong moral commitment. This moral commitment is reflected in fair and transparent decision-making. The literature emphasizes that integrity is the fundamental foundation of charismatic leadership. Without integrity, a leader's charisma tends to be superficial and unsustainable. Leaders who uphold moral values are more likely to gain the trust of their followers. This trust subsequently develops into long-term commitment. Thus, a leader's moral character greatly determines the quality of their charisma.

The characteristics of charismatic leaders are formed through a combination of personal qualities and leadership behaviors. The literature suggests that charisma is not merely an innate trait, but one that can be developed. Experience, learning, and self-reflection play important roles in shaping charismatic leadership. Charismatic leaders are able to adapt their leadership style to organizational situations. This flexibility strengthens the leader's influence over followers. Therefore, the characteristics of charismatic leadership are multidimensional. These characteristics serve as the foundation for understanding their impact on work culture.

B. Work Culture in the Perspective of Charismatic Leadership

Work culture is defined as a system of values, norms, and practices that develop within an organization (Lubis & Hanum, 2020). The literature suggests that work culture does not emerge spontaneously, but rather through an ongoing social process. Leaders play a central role in shaping this work culture. In charismatic leadership, the leader's values become the primary reference for employees' behavior. The values instilled by the leader are then internalized by organizational members. This process of internalization shapes shared work patterns and work ethics. Thus, work culture can be understood as a reflection of the leadership that is practiced.

Charismatic leaders function as symbols of an organization's work

culture(Ozgenel, 2020). Every action and decision made by the leader serves as an example for employees. The literature indicates that leaders' role modeling has a stronger influence than formal rules. When leaders demonstrate discipline and commitment, employees tend to emulate these behaviors. This, in turn, reinforces a positive and productive work culture. Conversely, inconsistency on the part of leaders can weaken the work culture. Therefore, the behavior of charismatic leaders is a critical determinant of the quality of work culture.

Work culture influenced by charismatic leadership is generally visionary in nature. The leader's vision serves as the main guideline in carrying out work activities. Employees understand that each task has meaning in achieving organizational goals. The literature notes that a visionary work culture enhances employees' sense of belonging to the organization. This sense of belonging motivates employees to perform beyond formal job requirements. In addition, a visionary work culture encourages collaboration and teamwork. This demonstrates that charismatic leadership is capable of building a future-oriented work culture.

Charismatic leadership also contributes to the formation of an adaptive work culture. Charismatic leaders encourage openness to change and innovation(Adiguzel & Cakir, 2020). The literature shows that employees are more willing to express ideas in environments led by charismatic leaders. Psychological safety becomes an important factor in fostering an adaptive work culture. Charismatic leaders are able to create a climate of trust that supports innovation. In such a work culture, mistakes are viewed as part of the learning process. As a result, organizations become more responsive to change.

The work culture developed under charismatic leadership tends to be strong and deeply internalized. The literature emphasizes that the strength of work culture depends on leadership consistency. Charismatic leaders are able to maintain value consistency over the long term. This consistency creates

stability within the organizational work culture. A strong work culture enhances organizational effectiveness and performance. Moreover, it strengthens organizational identity. Therefore, charismatic leadership plays a strategic role in the development of work culture.

C. The Impact of Charismatic Leadership on Organizational Work Culture

The literature review indicates that charismatic leadership has a positive impact on work culture. This impact is reflected in increased employee motivation and work enthusiasm. Charismatic leaders are able to foster a sense of optimism within the organization. This optimism becomes a collective energy that strengthens the work culture (Wrenn, 2023). The literature notes that employees feel more inspired in environments led by charismatic leaders. Such inspiration encourages employees to work with a high level of dedication. Thus, charismatic leadership contributes to the development of a performance-oriented work culture.

In addition to motivation, charismatic leadership also affects employee loyalty. The literature shows that employees tend to develop emotional attachment to charismatic leaders. This attachment strengthens their commitment to the organization. As a result, the work culture becomes more cohesive and harmonious. Working relationships among organizational members become more cooperative. Charismatic leaders play a role in fostering a sense of togetherness. This sense of togetherness serves as the foundation for a sustainable work culture.

However, the literature also reveals the potential negative effects of charismatic leadership. Excessive dependence on a leader can weaken employees' independence. (Lu, Liu, & Huang, 2020) A work culture that is overly centered on a leader figure risks becoming unsustainable. When the leader is no longer in position, the work culture may deteriorate. Therefore, charismatic leadership needs to be balanced with strong organizational systems and values. The literature emphasizes the importance of

institutionalizing leadership values. In this way, the work culture can be maintained despite leadership changes.

The impact of charismatic leadership on work culture is also influenced by organizational context. Factors such as organizational type, structure, and employee characteristics affect the effectiveness of charismatic leadership. The literature indicates that not all contexts are suitable for a charismatic leadership style. In highly bureaucratic organizations, the influence of charisma tends to be limited. In contrast, in dynamic organizations, charismatic leadership is more effective. This suggests that the impact of charismatic leadership is situational. Therefore, the application of charismatic leadership should be adapted to the organizational context.

Overall, the literature review shows that charismatic leadership has a significant influence on work culture. This influence can be either positive or negative depending on how it is applied. Effective charismatic leaders are able to build an inspiring and productive work culture. However, without proper management, charisma can become a source of dependency. The literature emphasizes the importance of balancing personal charisma with organizational systems. With such balance, work culture can develop in a sustainable manner. These findings reinforce the importance of in-depth studies on charismatic leadership within organizations.

DISCUSSION

Based on the findings of the literature review, it can be understood that charismatic leadership is a multidimensional leadership construct and does not rely on a single aspect alone. A leader's charisma is formed through the integration of personal qualities, leadership behaviors, and consistent moral values. Personal appeal, a clear vision, persuasive communication, the courage to take risks, and moral integrity emerge as the core elements of charismatic leadership. These elements operate simultaneously in shaping followers' perceptions of the leader. Such perceptions become the foundation for the development of trust, loyalty, and

employees' emotional attachment. Within organizations, trust and emotional attachment are essential prerequisites for the formation of a strong work culture. Thus, charismatic leadership influences not only individuals but also the collective value system of the organization.

The discussion of the findings indicates that work culture cannot be separated from the dominant leadership figure within an organization. Charismatic leaders function as role models who symbolically represent organizational values. The values demonstrated through leaders' actions are subsequently internalized by employees through repeated social processes. This process explains why leaders' role modeling is more effective than formal regulations in shaping work culture. When leaders consistently demonstrate discipline, commitment, and vision orientation, these values evolve into shared work habits. The resulting work culture goes beyond mere structural compliance and reflects collective awareness. This awareness strengthens organizational identity and employees' sense of belonging. Therefore, charismatic leadership serves as the main driving force in the construction of work culture.

The literature findings further show that charismatic leadership significantly encourages the formation of a visionary and adaptive work culture. The leader's vision becomes a framework of meaning that guides daily work activities. Employees do not work merely to fulfill tasks, but also to contribute to the organization's long-term goals. This visionary work culture enhances intrinsic motivation and employee commitment. Moreover, charismatic leadership creates psychological safety that promotes innovation. Employees become more confident in expressing ideas and taking initiative without fear of sanctions. In the long run, this adaptive work culture enhances organizational competitiveness. This demonstrates that charismatic leadership directly contributes to organizational sustainability, as illustrated in the figure below.



Figure 1 Charimastic Leadership

The figure illustrates a charismatic leadership model that positions the leader as the central source of influence within the organization, surrounded by various interconnected key characteristics. At the center of the model, symbols of the leader and followers emphasize that charismatic leadership is relational in nature and is built through social interaction. The arrows pointing toward the center indicate that each characteristic contributes directly to leadership effectiveness.

One prominent characteristic is high self-motivation, which reflects the leader's internal drive to continuously develop and achieve organizational goals. This motivation is reinforced by strong determination and high passion, enabling leaders to remain consistent and resilient in the face of challenges. These three characteristics represent the energy and perseverance that serve as fundamental sources of a leader's charisma.

Furthermore, the aspect of personal integrity is reflected through the characteristics of humility, self-discipline, and accountability. Humility represents the leader's awareness of personal limitations, while self-discipline demonstrates the ability to regulate behavior in accordance with values and goals. Accountability underscores the leader's commitment to decisions and their consequences. The combination of these aspects builds trust and moral legitimacy in the eyes of followers.

The figure also highlights the importance of social and emotional intelligence, as reflected in the characteristics of caring for others, emotional intelligence, and self-awareness. Caring for others enables leaders to understand the needs and feelings of their followers. Emotional intelligence helps leaders manage their own emotions as well as those of others effectively. Self-awareness serves as the foundation for leaders to act authentically and reflectively.

In addition, the model incorporates the characteristics of being supportive and technologically savvy. A supportive attitude reflects the leader's role as a facilitator and enabler of employees. Meanwhile, technological competence represents the demands of modern leadership that must adapt to digital developments. These two characteristics enhance the relevance of charismatic leadership in contemporary organizational contexts.

Overall, the figure demonstrates that charismatic leadership is the result of the integration of personal, moral, emotional, and professional qualities of the leader. These characteristics do not stand alone but complement one another in shaping strong leadership influence. The model emphasizes that charisma is not merely personal charm, but the outcome of consistently internalized competencies and values. Consequently, charismatic leadership has great potential to build an inspiring, adaptive, and sustainable work culture.

CONCLUSION

Charismatic leadership plays a crucial role in shaping and strengthening organizational work culture. The characteristics of charismatic leaders—such as a clear vision, moral integrity, inspirational communication skills, empathy, self-discipline, and emotional intelligence—have been proven to build trust and employees' emotional attachment. This trust becomes the foundation for the internalization of leadership values into everyday work behavior. The process of value internalization subsequently forms a visionary, adaptive, and performance-oriented work culture. However, charismatic leadership also needs to be managed systematically to avoid excessive dependence on the leader as a central figure. By

balancing personal charisma with strong organizational systems, charismatic leadership can contribute sustainably to organizational effectiveness and success.

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