

LARRY PAGE'S STYLES OF LEADERSHIP

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ABSTRACT

Leaders are very important for organizations and businesses. The various characters of leaders can determine the success of an organization due to their role and responsibility for planning, organizing, and decision-making of organizational strategies to achieve their goals. One of the leaders whose characteristic is quite interesting and possibly become our role models is Larry Page, a co-founder of Google Inc. The researchers used qualitative research methods by descriptive research in explaining Larry Page style of leadership in leading Google Inc. Result of this study shows that Larry Page has a very open and equal way of leading, making him a democratic and transformational leader for an instance Larry believe in crazy ideas of their employees since he believes that insane ideas could change the world whereas not all the leaders can trust their subordinate. To hear the ideas, Larry always encourages his subordinate to speak up at every opportunity and instantly give them constructive feedback.

Keywords: *Larry Page, leadership style, transformational, democratic, Google Inc., organizational behavior.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Leadership is defined as a process whereby individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal (Kreitner and Kinicki, 2010). It also defines as the ability to influence and motivate people within organizations (Dorfman and House, 2004; House et al., 1999; Javidan and Carl, 2005). Leadership also can occur at multiple levels in an organization such as at the individual level, for example, leadership involves mentoring, coaching, inspiring, and motivating. Furthermore, leaders also build teams, generate cohesion, and resolve conflicts at the group level; finally, leaders build culture and generate change at the organizational level. Therefore, leaders are very important for organizations and

businesses for planning and organizing their activities to achieve their objectives. The success of an organization mostly depends on the capability of leaders to lead the organization. Learning more about some of the things that make people become strong leaders is one way of potentially improving our skills. In the globalization and modern era where everyone is connected, in the sense that everyone can always communicate and exchange information, and at any time changes can occur in the world, our organizations and businesses must have the right leader.

This study is trying to portray the role of a leader who has successfully led his organization and develop a sustainable competitive advantage for their company. We

choose Larry Page, a co-founder of Google Inc., a leading multinational company in the field of Internet services and products such as search technology, web computing, software, online advertising. He is constantly on the go waiting to change Google for the better.

Google's success is inseparable from its leader leadership styles, including Larry Page's style of leading. Larry Page's leadership style and skills may not be fully able, followed, and applied in our organization or company. At least Larry Page's profile and track records can be an example and reference for us as leaders. Its application is relative and situational following our culture, organizational or corporate conditions, environment or market, and the resources, also much depending on our personality as the leader.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

To analyze Larry Page's style of leadership, we conducted a literature review as the basis of our analysis. This literature review consists of a discussion about the concept of leadership as well as the leadership style that has been identified by the experts and exists for the current years.

The Concept of Leadership

The study of leadership has captured the public's attention, especially the attention of experts for several centuries. It means that the study of leadership has become an important discussion in human life. This is a form of public response to the assumption that leadership is the key element of business or organizational success. Therefore, some experts try to define the concept of leadership. However, there is no permanent consensus on the definition or the concept of leadership. According to House and Mitchell, leadership is a skill to influence others or the followers

through motivation to encourage followers or workers' satisfaction in carrying out their job. In the other words, leadership is a skill that involves a process of influence (House & Mitchell, 1975). The process of influence will have resulted in followers' performance. Some experts argued that the process of influence consists of the influence to the organization or corporate culture which had implications for employee commitment, job satisfaction and thus affected employee performance results (Morales, Barrionuevo, & Gutiérrez, 2012). Therefore, leadership is considered as the key element that determines the results of organizational performance and success (Wang & et al, 2005).

Other studies suggest the process of how leadership can influence their followers. The first stage is choosing the right people for the organization. Choosing the right people means choosing people who fit the organization's values (organization fit) and people who are compatible with the job/position that will be their responsibility (Collins, 2002). Choosing the right people is a very important step in determining organizational success. The next step is providing other means and resources for followers to complete their jobs. Also, leaders may hold training to improve the followers' skills as well as building followers' self-efficacy (Winston & Patterson, 2006). The leader will have the power or ability to influence their followers to achieve the organization's goals when the followers have inline values with the organization and have the means to improve their skills and self-efficacy (Hersey, 1997). Leadership then can contribute to building followers' positive thoughts towards organizational goals through these steps (Capezio & Morehouse, 1997). However, the leader's role in influencing followers is also determined by the leadership style of the leader.



Leadership Style

Each leader has their leadership style. According to Puni, Ofeo, and Okoe, leadership style can determine the organization's performance and success through a process of influences on companies' culture and interpersonal control through the application of reward and punishment system as well as by giving motivation to individuals to influence their performance (Puni, Ofei, & Okoe, 2014). Transformational leadership is one of the leadership styles that is widely discussed over the past twenty years (Zhu, Song, & Johnson, 2019). Transformational leadership is considered as the effective leadership style to create positive performance output from their followers through inspirational ways, motivation as well as intellectual stimulation (Bass, 1990). Also, Bass assumed that transformational leadership is an accommodative leadership style for organizations in the globalization era (Bass, 1997).

A leader with a transformational leadership style identical to the change. In other words, transformational leaders are usually like in various levels of the organization that leads to the achievement of organizational goals. The changes are conducted by influencing their followers through motivation to align vision and values between followers and the organization. The motivation can be built by giving fair treatments and appreciation for all followers. Thus, motivation will encourage and support the process of developing and empowering every follower positively (Carless, Wearing, & Mann, 2000). Therefore, Bass and Avolio identify the four main characteristics of transformational leaders, which are idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass & Avolio, 1994).

Idealized influence means that transformational leaders can engage followers for aligning their interest with the leader and organization's interest voluntarily (Bass & Avolio, 1994). It will build commitment as well as confidence in both the leaders and the followers to achieve the organization's objectives. Inspirational motivation shows that transformational leaders can communicate the leaders' and organization values to the followers through inspirational and motivating ways. In other words, transformational leaders can be inspiring role models for their followers. Intellectual stimulation means that leaders can stimulate the followers' intellectual abilities covering creativity, innovativeness, and the way of thinking on handling challenges and solving problems (Nging & Yazdanifard, 2015). It can be held by providing certain tasks or challenges to be solved by the followers to improve the followers' ability in problem-solving. Meanwhile, individualized consideration means that transformational leaders involve the process of individual analysis and adopt non-judgmental principles in treating their followers. It means that transformational leaders treat followers equally and provide fair opportunities for individuals to develop themselves (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Thus, alignment between the leader's vision and values with followers will be formed voluntarily. Even according to Colbert, Kristof Brown, and Bradley & Barrick, the implementation of cohesion and motivation instruments can produce an organizational performance at the highest level (Colbert, Kristof-Brown, Bradley, & Barrick, 2008).

Another leadership style that can be paired with transformational leadership is democratic leadership. The basic assumption of this leadership style is that every individual is trustworthy and likes challenges and is

responsible. Thus, Jones et al (2016) and Raelin, identified the characteristics of democratic leadership with friendliness, helpfulness, and encouragement of participation (Fiaz, Su, Ikram, & Saqib, 2017). Democratic leaders will build a collaborative work atmosphere by involving followers in the decision-making process to encourage and develop the followers' capabilities, innovation, and creativity in solving problems. This behavior is identical to the intellectual stimulation behavior of transformational leaders. In this way, democratic leaders can share their visions and values with their followers and this situation can build inspiration and motivation for the followers. This is in line with the inspirational motivation characteristics of transformational leadership.

Leaders with a democratic leadership style also treat their staff/followers fairly by giving individuals the freedom to mingle with one another to develop ideas for achieving organizational goals (Chukwusa, 2019). This attitude has a relationship with the attitude of transformational leaders, namely individualized consideration. Those actions will create good relationships between the leader and their followers and also build followers' respect for their leaders so that leaders can become idealized influences for their followers (Chukwusa, 2019). Based on those discussions, we can conclude that transformational and democratic leadership has four main similar characteristics, those are *idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration*. Therefore, it can be analogous that a leader with a transformational leadership style can simultaneously concurrently a democratic leadership style.

III. METHOD

This study was conducted by using qualitative research design methods. According to Wahyuni (2019), qualitative research involves an in-depth understanding of human behavior and the reasons that govern human behavior. Yin (2016) stated that qualitative research most of all involve studying the meaning of people's lives, as experienced under real-world conditions. Unlike quantitative research, qualitative research relies on reasons behind various aspects of behavior. Simply put, it investigates the why and how of decision making, as compared to what, where, and when of quantitative research (Yin, 2003). Hence, the need is for smaller but focused samples rather than large random samples, in which qualitative research categorizes data into patterns as the primary basis for organizing and reporting results.

This study will compare literature review related to leadership and organization with some secondary data about Larry Page. In this case, we are going to answer Larry Page's style of leadership and its impact on Google. There were several steps we conducted to complete this research. First, we gain much information about Larry Page, how he leads, and how his leadership style. The data collected through literature study by secondary data. This step is aimed at adding our insight about Larry Page. Second, we were looking for relevant leadership concepts or theories as a basis of our analysis. Third, we implemented the theory of leadership to analyze Larry Page's style of leadership. Fourth, we present our analysis result in this research about Larry Page Style of leadership in leading Google Inc. This method was chosen because of the accessibility problems, where the world is going on pandemic COVID-19, and our limited access to Larry Page.



IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Larry Page was born on March 26th, 1973 in Michigan. He grew up around computers and his passion for invention, technology, and business. He was once Google's CEO before 2015, an American multinational technology company that specializes in Internet-related services and products, which include online advertising technologies, a search engine, cloud computing, software, and hardware. Leadership skills in innovation, patience, and situational approach to employee empowerment have helped Larry Page successfully design Google's governance structure (Elmer, 2011).

The page also acknowledged that he entered the Leader Shape program. It was a University Michigan personal development program that originated in the early 1990s in the College of Engineering where he went for college. Page stated that it was an amazing experience that helped him a lot when he started Google. Leaders might need to take on one or more approaches to handle organizational changes, in this analysis, we'd like to focus on the transformational & democratic leadership of Larry Page.

Consider the literature study, one of the main characteristics of transformational leaders is that they like changes. However, Larry Page often said that he always wants to change the world (Flammang, 2008). This mission is implemented through some behaviors of transformational leaders. One of the behaviors of transformational leaders is intellectual stimulation. However, this behavior was also adopted by the democratic style of leadership.

Intellectual stimulation is defined as having a leader who encourages innovation and creativity, as well as critical thinking and problem-solving. Consider the literature review, the first step of a leader to influence their followers is through a process of

choosing the right people. Therefore, Google Inc under Page's leadership also implemented this process where the intellectual stimulation process began from its recruitment process by "choosing the right people." Choosing the right people is conducted by hiring candidates through consistent recruitment procedures, hiring candidates from various backgrounds with a wide range of experience, and considering the geographic and social-economic aspects (Google, 2020). In other words, all structures and elements of Google Inc. are constructed to be the representation of the best and chosen global talents to enrich Google's culture as well as Google Inc.'s performance.

On the other side, Larry also provides means for the employees or subordinates to improve the process of employees' development. Based on Nging & Yazdanifard (2015), Larry needs his employees to believe in crazy ideas and to accept all ideas because he believes those ideas could change the world. As a result, he is more likely to hear and include other people's creative ideas. This could be one of the forms of intellectual stimulation since Page encourages their subordinates to bring up every little idea they have. On the other hand, gathering insights, ideas, as well as participation from his followers, are such a way for Larry Page to avoid an autocratic leadership style, which is the contradiction of the democratic leadership style. Therefore, we can say that this character covers Page as a transformational and democratic leader. Kim Scott a former Google executive mentioned that one of Larry Page's methods is encouraging employees to speak up in meetings and offer her constructive feedback because honest conversations could increase the productivity of team members and leaders could be more informed (Ward, 2017). This might imply Page as a democratic leader since he constrains his people to

participate by building comfortable environments such as honest discussions.

Google Inc., under Page's leadership also constructed an open working environment by designing its offices, namely Googleplex without cubicles and divider walls between divisions or departments to build honest discussions, encourage participation and therefore build strong teamwork among all layers of the organization. Google Inc. also built a comfortable working atmosphere by providing free lunch, health, and dental care, also some kind of entertainment for employees such as football and puzzle playing facilities. These are intended to make the employees more comfortable to spend their time at the Googleplex, therefore, it will increase the communication, sharing session, and discussion intensity between all employees (Flammang, 2008). High intensity of honest communication and discussion will lead to the stimulation of creative and innovative thinking as a part of intellectual stimulation. On the other hand, these systems also intended to implement equalitarianism, non-elitism, and non-hierarchical principles. It means Larry Page treats his employees fairly and equally.

As a transformational leader, Page also motivates his team with both financial and non-financial motivation. Page treats his employees equally and he gives them the freedom to do anything to increase their creativity and productivity. For example, Page provides his employees a program called the practice "20 percent time". It's one day in a week to work on projects employees are interested in and may benefit the Company. According to Google Inc.'s philosophy, the "work should be challenging and the challenge should be fun" (Flammang, 2008). It shows that Page also puts attention on individual consideration in managing his subordinates because Page provides fair opportunities for

individuals to develop themselves. However, this individual consideration by upholding equality and avoiding hierarchical systems is also part of the democratic style of leadership.

Larry page also motivates his employees by his actions. Page always shows an inspirational attitude towards his employees. Although Page holds the status as the Google Inc. CEO, Page shows a humble and relatively simple lifestyle. Other than that, Page avoids being much exposed. However, Page will eventually show up with casual outfits, wearing a t-shirt, jeans, and sneakers in some events. Page even sometimes dressed and acted funny in front of his employees by wearing capes and leaped onstage (Flammang, 2008). This can foster a sense of close relationship with his subordinates and indirectly foster an inspirational motivation role to the leader as Larry Page did in this case.

Also, Elmer (2011) stated that Google's success depends upon the following leadership strategies of Page that brought Google Inc. announced as the best workplace by Fortune in 2016. Those strategies are: (a) To pay attention to the innovative ideas and use the best opportunities to implement them; (b) To concentrate on teamwork; (c) To avoid the use of bureaucracy; (d) To adopt a quick and concise work structure; (e) To recognize the importance of small changes within the organization.

The motivation theories that Larry Page uses are Mayo & Herzberg's theory and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Participative management is way more encouraging and Page believes that behaving and treating employees is way more important than making money. On the other hand, in the end, it increased Google's services and protected employee happiness.

Therefore, alignment between Larry Page as a leader and his employees' interest could be created, then the leader became an

idealized influence for the followers (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Besides, according to Keskes (2014), the adoption of the leadership skills like empowering of employees, situational approach to innovation and a high degree of patience has helped Page in successfully designing the management structure of Google and has fetched him the title of “50 highest rated CEOs” by Glass door’s annual CEO survey.

V. CONCLUSION

Leadership is a very important thing in determining the success of a company. A good leader must be able to adjust to the organization and be able to help his organization to achieve success. In leadership theory, many leadership styles that can help someone to lead the organization, among these leadership styles are transformational and democratic leadership. Leaders with transformational and democratic styles are leaders with the ability to influence their employees, and they can motivate the employee by inspiring them. Many leadership

leaders are successful and have transformational and democratic leadership styles.

Larry Page is one of the founders of a world-famous company, Google Inc, he is one of the many leaders who use transformational and democratic leadership styles. Many things in his leadership that we should emulate. His transformational and democratic leadership style made him always open with ideas developed by his employees, he also never discriminated against his employees to listen to their ideas. Also, with this leadership style, he can motivate his employees to continue to innovate in thinking and finally help Google Inc., grow even more.

Based on the discussion above, we can conclude the transformational leadership style and democracy is a good leadership style if applied in the right organizational culture. Many people have proven successful in bringing the company forward and developing with this leadership style, one of which is Larry Page.

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