

## Leader Vision for Effective Leadership

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**Abstract**—Jalannya suatu organisasi yang efektif sangat bergantung pada kepemimpinan dari organisasi tersebut. Salah satu aspek pentingnya adalah visi yang akan dibawa oleh pimpinan. Dengan visi itulah organisasi bergerak, didukung oleh beberapa tahapan. Sekarang bagaimana menjadikan visi tersebut bekerja untuk organisasi.

**Keywords**—Leadearship, organisasi, kompetensi

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### I. INTRODUCTION

The discussion about leadership is a long and continually discourse. Each decade experts have different approaches to describing leaders and their leadership styles. For example in the 1920s the discussion of leadership concentrated on the trait approach – leadership was defined as based on the personal traits and some characteristics that distinguished leaders from others. The behavior approach was popular in the 1940s – experts started to consider the behavior of the leader which played an important role in influencing the followers. And in the 1960s – 1970s the expert introduced the contingency or situational approach of leadership – leadership style was not only influenced by the leader’s behavior but was also determined by the situation of the followers and the environment. The latest approach was the new paradigm of leadership after the era of transformational dan transactional model.

Apart from all those approaches, one thing that experts will not disagree, at least this is what I believe, is that every leader “should” have vision. I use the word should because some times the leaders do not have any vision but what they do have is a planning. According to Kotter (1988: 25-26), effective leadership:

“the process of creating a vision of the future that takes into account the legitimate long-term interests of the parties involved in that activity; of developing a rational strategy for moving forward that vision; of enlisting the support of the key power centers whose cooperation, compliance, or teamwork is necessary to produce that movement; and of motivating highly that core group of people whose actions are central to implementing the strategy”.

Therefore, after creating a vision a leader is required to develop a rational strategy, enlist the support, and motivate group of people to translate the vision into a reality.

In this paper I will discuss about what a vision is and what it has to do with leadership. I think it is also important to discuss about the functions of leadership as well as to describe what characteristics of good vision are. To make it work, a vision should be shared among the member of the organization, therefore I will also discuss about the reason of why should it be shared and how to make it work in the organization. A short a conclusion will end this paper but before that I will discuss about the condition in which a vision need to be renewed.

## II. WHAT IS A VISION ?

Nanus (1992: 8) suggested that “a vision is a realistic, credible, attractive future for your organization”. So this is much more complicated than a planning which can be simply meant a method of action or procedure. Collin and Porras (1991 as cited by Nanus, 1992: 72) said that “the vision concept and statement should be seen to embody two components: a guiding philosophy and a tangible image”. It means that vision is a guiding force for the organization to move. It is the imagination of the leader but then becomes the spirit of the organization as long as it is touchable.

## III. WHAT IS THE VISION HAS TO DO WITH LEADERSHIP?

The leader’s ability of having a vision is consistent with what Hersey and Blanchard (1988: 5) suggest about the competencies that a leader should have. They mentioned three competencies that a leader should possess: 1) diagnosing – being able to understand the situation you are trying to influence, 2) adapting – being able to adapt your behavior and the other resources you have available to meet the contingencies of the situation, and 3) communicating – being able to communicate in a way that people can easily understand and accept.

The first competency, diagnosing, is furthered explained by Hersey and Blanchard (1988: 5) as understanding what the situation is now and knowing what you can reasonably expect it to be in the future. This means that a leader should be able to understand where they are now, and where they are going to go to or in other words it can be said that a leadership and vision cannot be separated. Daft (1999: 124) also suggested that top leaders are responsible for knowing the organization’s environment, considering what it might be like in five or ten years, and setting a direction for the future that everyone can believe in. A successful leader should be able to set up the vision of their organization and to communicate the vision to the follower so that the follower will have a feeling of ownership toward the vision. That is why communication skills are one of the most important competencies that a leader should have.

The skill of communication is paramount importance in setting and sharing their vision to the followers. To illustrate this, in school of education, Flinders University, the new elected dean Collin was invited by FUIIE to talk in a seminar to let the members of the School of Education know his

vision. This is a very good chance for Collin to share his vision with his colleagues and also the customers (students). His strong vision can answer the questions of the members of the school as well as clarify the anxieties and uncertainties. This seminar was proof that an effective leader should have a vision and should be able to communicate it to the members. Maxwell, (2002) in “Valuing Your Vision” said that without vision, leaders can find themselves and their organizations going nowhere fast. But a good vision can be the roadmap to an organization’s successful destination.

### A. What are its functions?

Murgatroyd and Morgan (1993: 84) stated that there are three functions of a vision:

- A vision is to inspire. This should become a basis for encouraging, enabling, empowering and developing the staff of any organizations, and should also be regarded as the essential for all actions.
- To act as a cornerstone for decision-making. When making a decision, all members of the organization should ask whether they will agree with the vision or not.
- To enable all in the school (organization) to find common points for focusing energy to achieve sustainable steep-slope quality improvements, i.e. a vision is the primary vehicle for creating alignment of energies within an organization.

Daft (1999: 127-129) suggested the functions of vision as:

- To link the present to the future. Vision connects what is going on right now with what the organization aspires to. A vision is always about the future, but it begins with the here and now.
- To energize people and garners commitment. People want to feel enthusiastic about their work. A powerful vision frees people from the mundane by providing them with a challenge worthy of their best efforts.
- To give meaning to work. People have always needed to find meaning and dignity in their work. People love having a large purpose for what they do, and they want to feel pride in their work.
- To establish a standard of excellence. Vision provides a measure by which employees can gauge their contributions to the organizations.

Most workers welcome the chance to see how their work fits into the whole. A good vision brings out the best by speaking to the hearts of employees, letting them be a part of something bigger than themselves.

Between Murgatroyd and Morgan ideas and Daft ideas they are fit each other though Murgatroyd and Morgan are more applicative while Daft is more philosophical.

*B. What is a good vision?*

In describing a good vision, Daft (1999: 130-131) mentioned four criteria of a good vision, namely:

- Vision has broad appeal. The ideal vision is identified with the organization as a whole, not with a single leader or even a top leadership team. It 'grabs people in the gut' and motivates them to work toward a common end. It allows each individual to act independently but in the same direction.
- Vision deals with change. Vision is about action and challenges people to make important changes. Change can be frightening, but a clear sense of direction helps people face the difficulties and uncertainties involved in the change process.
- Vision encourages faith and hope. Vision is an emotional appeal to our fundamental human needs and desires – to feel important and useful, to believe we can make a real difference in the world.
- Vision reflects high ideals. Good visions are idealistic. Vision has power to inspire and energize people only when it paints an uplifting future.
- Vision defines the destination and the journey. A good vision for the future includes specific outcomes that the organization wants to achieve.

Maxwell (2002) described a true vision as:

- Inseparable from the leader; a true vision will reflect the leader's most basic values and beliefs. If it does not, the leader cannot share the vision to his or her people with integrity and expect that they will carry it out.
- Empowering; the leader with vision believes not only that it can be done, but that it must be done. And that confidence will spill over to the people who will share the work of the vision. If a vision

does not instill confidence, it will not inspire a following.

- Clear; a vision must be a clear picture of an organization as its leader believes it can and must be. The clarity test is whether the followers can articulate the vision to one another.
- Long term; a vision must contain a clear destination, but one that demands development over time.
- People oriented; a vision should be from the heart of the leader and bear the fingerprints of the people.
- Futuristic; a vision is a mental picture of what tomorrow will look like. Visionaries develop present resources as a platform for tomorrow. They constantly draw the destination but carefully detail the journey.

Why should vision be shared among the members?

To make it have a real impact, a vision for the organization as a whole should be shared among individuals and departments. The vision's power lies in its ability to grab the attention of those both inside and outside the organization and to focus that attention on a common dream—a sense of direction that both makes sense and provides direction (Nanus, 1992: 16). Therefore top leaders' real work is to share the vision with others, and to help them develop their part of the vision so that every one has the picture. As Peter Senge (1994) said in the *Fifth Discipline*, a shared vision changes people's relationship with the organization. It creates a common identity and allows each employee to look at a manager and think of 'our company' rather than 'their company'. The vision becomes the common thread connecting people, involving them personally and emotionally in the organization.

When every person understands and embraces a vision, the organization becomes self-adapting. Although each individual acts independently, everyone is working in the same direction. In the new sciences, this is called the principle of self-reference. Self-reference means that each element in a system will serve the mission of the whole system when the elements are imprinted with an understanding of the mission of the whole. Thus the vision serves to direct and control people for the good of themselves and the organization (Daft, 1999: 132).

To develop a shared vision, leaders share their personal visions with others and encourage others to express their dreams for the future. This requires openness, good listening skills, and the courage to connect with others on an emotional level. Good leaders give up the idea that vision emanates from only the top. A leader's ultimate responsibility is to be in touch with the hopes and dreams that drive employees and find the common ground that binds personal dreams into a shared vision for the organization. As one successful CEO put it, "My job, fundamentally, is listening to what the organization is trying to say, and then make sure it is forcefully articulated (Daft, 1999: 133)."

Nanus and Dotts (1999: 80-81) suggest some important pay offs of a shared vision for the leader and the organization as:

- A shared vision provides focus, guiding decisions and actions and enabling managers to filter the many issues compete for their time and attention.
- A shared vision stimulates new ways of thinking. It encourages people to learn, try new approaches, and take risks.
- A shared vision can be the front end of a strategic planning process or the launching pad for a major effort to renew or revitalize an organization. It guides the setting of priorities and the creation of new agendas. It also influences program design and evaluation and the measurement of progress. In many cases it triggers a search for new alliances and partnerships, occasionally leading to a complete transformation of the organization.
- A shared vision serves as a wake-up call for the board and the staff to reexamine the organizational culture and operations in the light of the new sense of direction.

### C. How to make vision work?

To trigger the function of the vision, Murgatroyd and Morgan (1993: 84) suggested that the management teams need to:

1. Bring about the existence of a vision.
2. Communicate the vision constantly in all aspects of the work of the school (organization).
3. Set outrageous goals, which are clearly and strongly vision-related, and show how these goals link to the achievement of the vision.

4. Embody the vision in their day-to-day behavior as a team (called "walk the talk" in North America).

To describe how the vision work, Daft suggested some steps of strategic leadership. It started from setting up the vision, then setting up the mission, after that the detail of the strategies, and finally arrange for alignment and implementation.

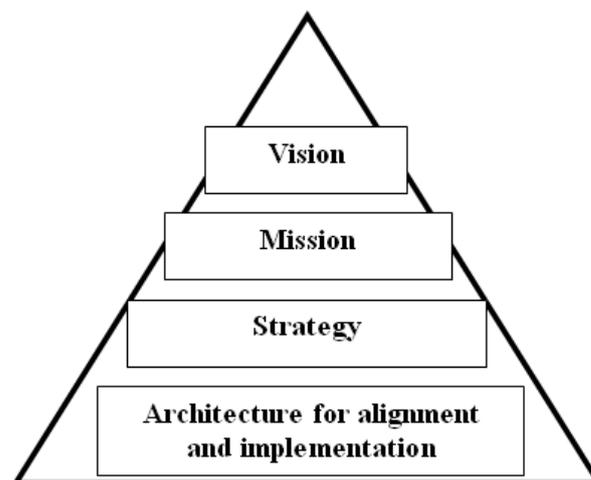


Fig. 1 The Domain of Strategic Leadership (Daft, 1999: 125)

Fig. 1 illustrates the levels that make up the domain of strategic leadership. Strategic leadership is responsible for the relationship of the external environment to choices about vision, mission, strategy, and their implementation. The vision reflects the environment and works in concert with the company's mission – its core values, purpose, and reason for existence. Strategy provides direction for translating the vision into action and is the basis for the development of specific mechanisms to help the organization achieve goals (Daft, 1999: 125-126).

It is important to remember that the vision continually grows and changes, while the mission endures. It serves as the glue that holds the organization together in times of change and guides strategic choices and decisions about the future (Daft, 1999: 135).

Strong missions and guiding visions are important, but they are not enough alone to make strong, powerful organizations. For organizations to succeed, they need ways to translate vision, values, and purpose into action, which is the role of strategy. Formulating strategy is the hard, serious work of taking a specific step toward the future.

Another job of the leader and management is to formulate and implement specific strategies that will achieve organizational goals and translate them into action.

In this case Daft (1999: 136) defined strategy as the general plan of action that describes resource allocation and other activities for dealing with the environment and helping the organization attain its goals. In formulating strategy, leaders ask questions such as “Where is the organization now? Where does the organization want to be? What changes and trends are occurring in the competitive environment? What courses of action can help us achieve our vision?” Developing effective strategies require active listening to people both inside and outside the organization, as well as examining trends and discontinuities in the environment.

Hopes and dreams for the future keep people moving forward. However, for leaders to make a real difference, they have to link those dreams with strategic actions. To be an effective leader, one has to transform those dreams into significant strategic actions.

#### *D. When to renew it (Change of vision)?*

The vision is not something that is static it is dynamic. It might be changed any time “when there is a realization that old ways of operating are no longer going to work, a good leader will be able to develop a new and appealing vision of the future, and this vision will be able to provide a strategic and motivational focus. Providing a clear statement about the purpose of the organization can inspire workers and lead to greater commitment. Leaders may provide a vision of the future that is attractive and engaging rather than simply disagreeing with what has been done in the past (for example Steve Jobs vision of the Apple Mac PC). Specialists in this area suggest that the leader must be a ‘change champion’ who can assemble and motivate a group in order to “pull” followers towards a new vision. Once the vision is developed, the implementation of change can be done by the setting of challenging goals for employees (<http://www.management.com>).

The role of vision is not only in the start-up phase of an organization but also throughout the organization’s entire life cycle. To understand where is the organization now and does it intend to go we can see it from its vision. Nanus (1992: 9) said that sooner or later, the time will come when an organization needs redirection or perhaps a

complete transformation, and then the first step should always be a new vision, a wake-up call to everyone involved with the organization that fundamental change is needed and is on the way. Thus there is a possibility that the vision be changed due to the need of new direction.

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS

It is obvious that leadership cannot be separated from vision. A good leader will have a good vision and a good vision is coming from a good leader. The vision is developed by looking at the present condition and thinking about a better future. The vision needs to be shared among the member of the organization, then it will be the spirit of the organization. Each member of the organization should feel that the vision is theirs. Only when the members have a sense of belonging the vision, will the vision work in the organization. To translate the vision into reality, the leader should be able to set up a clear mission and a clear strategy. When there is a need for new direction, a leader can change the vision of the organization

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