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Leadership Based on Path-Goal Theory in Organization Communication: A Perspective of Listening to the Labors' Voices

Gatut Priyowidodo

Communication Science Department, Petra Christian University, Surabaya, Indonesia

Abstract: This study aims to determine the laborer's perception about the directive, participative, and supporting leadership oriented toward the organization or company's objectives. This research applies the path-goal theory perspective as the main theory and leadership and motivational theories as supporting ones. This research applies a qualitative approach with a constructivist paradigm, and the research design is phenomenography. Data collection is done through field observations, in-depth and virtual interviews. Data analysis is carried out thematically by applying the NVIVO 12 application. The steps include data collection, phenomena structuring, signification (conceptualized differently), understanding variation (due to various concepts), empirical manner, concept identification, and space outcome. Data validity testing is done with a triangulation of theory and sources. The findings show that the laborers' perception is constructed in two forms. First, the perception of hope, where leaders are described as democratic figures that motivate employees, show participation and are open to suggestions and opinions. Second, implementation perceptions, in which the laborers describe leaders as individuals with a directive capability, tend to be authoritative, and do not take sides with the laborers' interest. The novelty of this research is the boldness in adopting phenomenography as a research design that is typical in education study to be taken as a new approach in organization communication to elaborate the informants' perception. Another novelty of this study relates to the fact that this study elaborates the concept of leadership from laborers' perspectives. The facts obtained from the field showed that gaps between laborers' and leaders' perspectives were quite high. For instance, the concept of "democracy" was rather unclear. Leaders perceive democracy as something related to freedom, while labors found it a form of "coercion". The field data collection is very limited due to the COVID-19 pandemic situation and the enforcement of limitations on community activities (PPKM in Indonesian) in Java and Bali. The concrete contribution of this research is to enrich theoretical study on organization communication and the implementation of the phenomenography method.

Keywords: leadership, laborer, organization communication, path-goal theory, phenomenography.

基於路徑-目標理論的組織溝通領導力：傾聽勞動者聲音的視角

摘要：本研究旨在確定勞動者對面向組織或公司目標的指導性、參與性和支持性領導的看法。本研究以路徑-目標理論視角為主要理論，以領導力和激勵理論為支撐。本研究採用具有建構主義範式的定性方法，研究設計為現象學。數據收集是通過實地觀察、深入和虛擬訪談完成的。通過應用英偉達 12 應用程序按主題進行數據分析。這些步驟包括數據收集、現象結構、意義（不同概念化）、理解變化（由於各種概念）、經驗方式、概念識別和空間結果。數據有效性測試是通過理論和來源的三角測量完成的。研究結果表明，勞動者的感知以兩種形式構建。首先是對希望的看法，領導者被描述為激勵員工、表現出參與並樂於接受建議和意見的民主人物。其次，在實施觀念中，勞動者將領導者描述為具有指導能力的個人，往往具有權威性，不會站在勞動者的利益一邊。本研究的新穎之處在於大膽採用現象學作為教育研究中典型的研究設計，作為組織傳播的一種新方法來闡述被調查者的感知。本研究的另一個新穎之處在於本研究從勞動者的角度闡述了領導力的概念。從現場獲得的事實表明，勞動者和領導者的觀點之間的差距相當大。例如，"民主"的概念就相當模糊。領導者認為民主與自由有關，而勞工則認為它是一種"強制"形式。由於新冠肺炎大流行情況以及爪哇和巴

About the author: Gatut Priyowidodo, Communication Science Department, Petra Christian University, Surabaya, Indonesia
Corresponding author Gatut Priyowidodo, gatpri@petra.ac.id

厘島對社區活動（印度尼西亞語為印度尼西亞語：社區賦權恢復計劃）的限制，現場數據收集非常有限。本研究的具體貢獻在於豐富了組織傳播的理論研究和現象學方法的實施。

关键词： 領導力、勞動者、組織溝通、路徑-目標理論、現象學。

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1. Introduction

In understanding the organization, employees and leaders are two entities with a mutual interest [1]. Without employees, leaders are meaningless. Similarly, without a leader, employees will suffer difficulty in achieving organizational goals. Organizational goals are attainable when the leader can motivate employees to work optimally.

Especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, employees face a very vulnerable situation. In Indonesia, there were 2.67 million layoffs [2]. Global employment losses have reached 114 million [3], illustrating the vulnerability of employees. In a difficult situation, employees are vulnerable to losing their jobs that apply to formal work (descent work) or informal work (vulnerable work).

Leaders must be the central figure in motivating employees to achieve organizational goals. It is a strategic role for the survival of a company or organization that is encountering difficult challenges. To date, the relationship between employees and leaders is seen as dominant-subordinate [4], leader-member exchange, a servant [5], patron-client [6], worker effectiveness [7], leader-follower, and collective culture relationship [8].

Path-goal theory studies focus on leadership motivation and leadership, information technology (IT), and knowledge management, behavioral style [9], academic setting, and leadership style [10]. In regards to the path-goal theory, to date seem to lack exploration on labor and leadership relations in business organizations. This study is very relevant to fill the research gap from this epistemological perspective and further enriches the results of other previous studies from different perspectives.

This study examines the concept of leadership characterized by laborers' motivational behavior regarding their work expectations and reality. The research objectives and questions, literature review, methodology, and research location are presented in the next parts. Findings and interpretations are discussed with a path-goal theory perspective, including conclusions and theoretical implications.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Path-Goal Theory of Leadership

Path-goal theory leadership is designed to explain how leaders can help employees along the path to goals with different leadership behaviors according to the situation and demand at hand. In path-goal theory, motivation is conceptualized from the perspective of the expectancy theory of motivation. The expectancy theory assumes that employees will be motivated if they feel competent, believe that their efforts will yield certain results, and rewards for doing their work are worthwhile. The challenge for a leader in the expectancy theory is to fully understand the goals of employees and the rewards associated with those goals. Employees expect effectiveness; for instance, they can achieve what they want and get rewards.

Path-goal theory is about how leaders motivate employees to achieve determined goals. From studies on what motivates employees, the path-goal theory first appeared in the literature on leadership in the early 1970s. Nowadays, there are quite a lot of researches that use path-goal theory as a theoretical framework.

Path-goal theory emphasizes the relationship between a leader's style and characteristics of followers and organizational settings. For a leader, it is imperative to use a leadership style that best meets followers' motivational needs by selecting behaviors that complement or supplement what is missing in the work setting. Leaders try to enhance followers' goal attainment by providing information or rewards in the work environment. The literature review explains that path-goal theory emphasizes a better understanding of how leaders motivate followers to achieve desired organizational goals. Path-goal theory determines a leader's style or behavior that best suits employees and the work environment to achieve goals.

This theory is designed to help leaders know how they can motivate their followers to achieve organizational goals, including how leadership behavior affects their performance in organizational settings. The leader's task is to improve employee performance and satisfaction while focusing on employee motivation. Path-goal theory emphasizes the relationship of a leader's style and characteristics of followers in organizational settings. A leader who wants to achieve organizational goals must use a leadership style that best meets the follower's motivation.

This theory assumes that a leader must set goals for his followers, explain the paths to achieve goals, remove obstacles that prevent them from achieving goals, and support followers. A theory emphasizes that the leader's task is to help employees achieve their goals and provide the necessary direction and/or support to ensure that their goals are compatible with the organization's overall goals.

The basic principles of path-goal theory emphasize that followers will be motivated if they feel competent, their efforts are rewarded, and find the payoff for their work. A leader can help followers by choosing a leadership style (directive, supportive, participative, or achievement-oriented). In other words, the leader's responsibility is to help followers achieve their goals by directing, guiding, and training them along the way. Fig. 1 illustrates the components of the path-goal theory.

Fig. 1 Component of path-goal theory [11]

2.2. Leadership and Motivation

Motivation is an important topic since one of the leadership competencies is motivating members of the organization or its employees. Leadership analysis consists of three layers of individual, group, and organizational levels. If these three aspects are not managed properly, there is a big potential for conflict within the organization.

In order to succeed, leaders must equip themselves with motivational skills. By definition, motivation is an activity or process related to three aspects of intensity, direction, and persistence [12]. Intensity is described how much a person struggles to achieve his goals. However, it does not mean that the results obtained will be maximal if the intensity is high. The intensity should be complemented by a quality effort that is consistent with the direction and goals of the organization.

The third aspect of persistence means how long organizational leaders persevere in the process of achieving organizational goals. Meanwhile, McClelland's theory of needs developed by David McClelland emphasizes that three factors determine motivation. They are the need for achievement (nAch) as the drive to excel, to achieve concerning a set of standards, need for power (nPow) as the need to make others behave in a way they would not have otherwise, and need for affiliation (nAff) as the desire for friendly and close interpersonal relationships. Furthermore, referring to the Goal-Setting theory developed by Edwin Locke, motivation is determined by three aspects of stimulus, acceptance, and feedback.

The explanation above illustrates that the relationship between leader and motivation is like two attached entities. Leaders without soft skills in the motivational field will find it difficult to direct their followers to achieve organizational goals. Several studies of leader and motivation emphasize knowledge sharing, emotional intelligence, employees' behaviors [13].

Based on theoretical discussions and the results of previous studies, research in the context of organizational communication studies within the perspective of path-goal theory is understudied. Some studies emphasize information technology, power [14], job satisfaction, leadership. The focal point of the research gap is on the epistemological and novelty aspects of research related to phenomenographic research, which is relatively new in the field of organizational communication. This research elaborates two basic assumptions of the research. The first assumption states that the type of leadership determines organizational goals. Second, types of leadership play an important role in motivating the laborers of a company or organization.

2.3. Research Framework/RO and RQ

This study described the concept of path-goal theory leadership that emphasizes motivational skills with the directive, supportive, participative, or achievement-oriented styles from the perspective of laborers. This study was conducted qualitatively with a phenomenographic design highlighting the conceptions constructed by the research subjects. As far as can be traced from the previous studies, there has been no research exploring aspects of the conception of the laborer based on path-goal theory. Leadership studies such as servant leadership [15], transformational leadership, and charismatic leadership [16] mostly focus on the actions of leaders [17]. Hence, this gap can be filled to enrich the study of leadership from the perspective of laborers.

The results of this study offer theoretical and practical implications. Theoretical implications deal with the enrichment of the scientific perspective of path-goal theory. The practical implication is encouraging leaders in private enterprises, especially business companies, to motivate their employees. Based on this orientation, some research questions - adaptations of studies in the public sector, are formulated.

RQ1: How do employees conceptualize the leadership in their organization or company?

RQ2: How does the employee's conception personally describe the directive leadership in the company?

RQ3: How does the employee's conception describe the leader-follower supportive leadership?

RQ4: How does the employee conception describe participatory leadership that emphasizes the processes that influence the goals of the private enterprise?

RQ5: How does the employee's conception describe achievement-oriented leadership?

3. Method

This study used a qualitative approach in the constructivist/interpretive paradigm. Qualitative research describes specific actions that must connect concepts with empirical data [18]. Meanwhile, the constructivist or interpretive paradigm emphasizes the subjective meaning of individual experiences. The design of this study used a phenomenography study [19]. The procedures carried out were data collection, structure and meaning of phenomena (conceptualized differently), variations in understanding (there are variations in different concepts [20]) empirical manner, identification of conceptions, and outcome space.

Phenomenographic design seeks to identify and describe different qualitative ways of experiencing certain aspects of reality. The understanding or experience of the informant is interpreted as the informant's conception or understanding. The understanding or experience is different from one another. Different conceptions are natural because each individual has a different way of interpreting an object [21].

Data collection techniques were interviews with questions focusing on informants' diverse experiences on the phenomena experienced. The research subjects (23 informants from 11 private companies) were selected purposively, including (1) individuals representing the local government, (2) workers/laborers, and (3) management representing the private company in East Java Province, Indonesia.

Phenomenographic questions were open-ended with a semi-structured interview protocol. The interview started with a formal greeting making the informant feeling comfortable being recorded. Any answers that require clarification are immediately verified by the informant to ensure the accuracy of the answers [22].

The entire interview was transcribed and stored on a flash disk. Transcripts were collected, re-examined if there were still unclear transcription. After being declared complete, the researcher reread it to find variations in the conception to make it easier in mind mapping. Each variation of the conception expressed by the informant was given a marker as a variation of the new conception. The same and different conceptions were categorized accordingly.

Phenomenographic analysis was done by repeatedly reading the transcript and addressing the informant autonomously. In order to facilitate the categorization of the conception of experience, the analysis was carried out using NVIVO 12 application as a qualitative analysis tool [23].

4. Results

Below are findings on Question Responses.

RQ1: How do employees conceptualize the leadership in their organization or company?

Laborers described various leadership experiences. Even if they were leaders or held high positions in the company, they were still considered laborers since they worked for the company, not the owner. It was stated by RR:

"He (the leader) is also a laborer, but it happens that he represents the management. As (who is in charge of) management, he must side with the interests of the corporation but also the interests of the employees. That is why both parties must understand that there are interests that must be fulfilled" – (Informant RR)

While others described that the leader had been contracted to represent the company's owner, they cannot be expected to fight for the interests of laborers or employees. The reason is that leaders' character and mindset are already different. Leaders must achieve the production targets. Employees must carry out operations. They are still given freedom as long as it does not interfere with productivity. Further, BU and Ev put some explanations:

"They are also already bound by a working relationship. As long as their activities do not interfere with work, do not interfere with working hours, and do not interfere with company activities, that is fine, I think so." – (Informant BU)

"Leaders give freedom to expression. However, we are bound by a work contract. Like it or not, we have to choose the priority especially during this pandemic." - (Informant Ev)

According to laborers' understanding, leaders in private enterprises were indeed vulnerable. If they do not side with the owner and pay attention to the interests of the laborers, they risk their job, and at any time, they could be fired. As emphasized by EH:

"Yeah... the risk is high for the leader to follow the will of the laborers. He could have lost his position because he was considered disloyal to the owner. Now, many leaders try to make the boss or owner happy" – (Informant EH)

RQ2: How does the employee's conception personally describe the directive leadership in the company?

Although the leaders and laborers are employees of the company, their status is different. Leaders should inspire, motivate, and have a strong directive leadership to achieve the goals or targets of the company. However, managing laborers is not the same as running a production machine. Workers are motivated if the leader is not only good at giving orders but also by example. As uttered by Bd:

"The leader must lead by example, not only just instructing A and B." – (Informant Bd)

Especially if the leader is his friend, this requires extra care in managing relationships. Because someone appointed as a leader with competencies may also bring up ego. As explained by AN, who has already worked for more than twenty years in a private enterprise:

"My obstacle is more related to personal ego. We have to admit that. My friend and I sometimes do not all agree. Sometimes we agree on things we do not agree on. The important thing is that the interests of the company are prioritized. We can also complete the demands and responsibilities of the company every month" – (Informant An)

In addition to competence, company management selects or appoints leaders whose close relationships with owners. Eh and An said:

"Especially in my company, the bosses or leaders are people with family relations to the owner. My boss is the wife of the owner." – (Informant Eh)

"My company is also led by two people who are related to each other. They have good business skills. Their collaboration is complementary, one in finance and one in production. – (Informant An)

However, the leader benefits from the labor regulations that the state has issued. So even though, for instance, they lack leadership competence, with the written rules in the law, whether they like it or not, the workers have to carry it out. In more detail, RR pointed out:

"And the obligations of workers have been stated in government regulations, so we must follow government regulations and standard salaries of the minimum standards." – (Informant RR)

RQ3: How does the employee's conception describe the leader-follower supportive leadership?

Supportive leadership is directed at realizing awareness of duties and responsibilities as well as the ability of the leader to encourage followers to carry out their duties. Hence, it is not just a relationship between leaders and followers but also a strong motivation for followers to carry out their duties. As explained by BU:

"The relationship is not just a boss with the leadership, but also a personal one. Thus, we give clear information without concealing what the company is really like, if it is a good performance, we say as it is, but if it lack of many things, we say as it is too" – (Informant BU)

However, when employees encounter problems in carrying out their duties, the leader is obliged to provide a solution. They do not let employees be left without a solution. As expressed by Ay:

"In my company, there is a staff team, a team of their own. Therefore, if there is a problem, the leaders and staffs hold a meeting where negotiate a new SOP or problem." – (Informant Ay)

The better the relationship between employees and leaders, the bond between them is also greater. There is potential for strong loyalty to the company. They do not see the wages they receive, but workers and leaders have a strong emotional bond. As declared by RR:

"In my personal opinion, the bond between laborers and the company sometimes cannot be judged by how much income they bring home, but there are also many things tied to the company, and income is just one of the. Second, a good work environment within a company with togetherness provides comfort." – (Informant RR)

RQ4: How does the employee conception describe participatory leadership that emphasizes the processes that influence the goals of the private enterprise?

This leadership prioritizes negotiation or consultation before a decision is made. There is no sudden decision without an initial negotiation and discussion. Leaders must open for dialogue and accept opinions from employees as partners. As stated by Dy:

"Actually, the union is a partner, and if everything is well regulated, the relationship is mutually beneficial. So far, the view of the management (laborer) is a threat. The worker is the partner of the company or the business partner." – (Informant Dy)

The laborers' expectations convey a message that the leader should not be authoritarian and win his ego. To achieve the goals of the organization, they must treat workers fairly because whatever happens in the company will influence many aspects. Interaction patterns need to be understood since the bigger the company, the more complex the problem. Ed put it this way:

"So he learns through the cases we face. I also have patterns from cases as well – from good cases to bad ones. We learn the pattern of communication, both internally and externally." – (Informant Ed)

RQ5: How does the employee's conception describe achievement-oriented leadership?

All business companies have the same goal. They are profit-oriented. Production targets are intermediate goals that lead to the achievement of the company goals. However, laborers as an important entity in the production chain of goods and services are often neglected. That is why it is difficult for laborers to fight by themselves. They must gather and maintain balance as explained by Ed and RR:

"There should be a relationship between a labor union and the management of the company. There should not only be a relationship between leaders and laborers. However, laborers must understand the difficulties faced by the company, so do not just think 'oh … company got profit this big', but we also should prepare for the future; moreover we are also facing a situation like this, and so we cannot just see it from the outside." – (Informant Ed)

Laborers or workers illustrate that the leadership, under any conditions, must encourage, not intimidate. Maybe the leaders motivate so that in difficult conditions, the laborers do not demand too much. However, if the laborers received the message

incorrectly, they would judge that the leaders only think for their interests and do not side with the laborers. As stated by RR:

"Management/leaders and laborers must understand each other because the company has many interests. They must be able to maintain many parties, not just one of the parties being considered. So, sometimes the strategy is an on-off or push-pull strategy." – (Informant RR)

The perception of laborers to the leaders is largely determined by the background and abilities of each laborer. No wonder some laborers were very supportive, but some were negligent that described by informants Bd and Ev:

"Because each laborer has different abilities, some are good at investigation, some - at argumentation, some are mediocre. Understanding the problem or task is also different, including when they see the leadership style in giving instructions. I give specific tasks that are different from one another. Then you are the goal. Well, to achieve this goal, later you will need this data. Where will you get the data from? We will have a discussion that is it." – (Informant Bd)

"I think the leaders should solve the problem not to be a source of trouble. Laborers have a lot of work pressure, but it is not fair if they are just blamed. I do not want we got blamed if we work hard but cannot achieve the monthly target. After all, we work as a team. Nevertheless, Alhamdulillah, we exceed the monthly target despite the pandemic." – (Informant Ev)

5. Discussion

The analysis was carried out thematically based on the research findings. There are four main themes, each of which is elaborated into several sub-themes. This analysis allows each of the themes is expanded and deepened to clarify the important message. More details are depicted in the visualization of Fig. 2.

Fig. 2 Path-goal theory leadership visualization

The four main components are directive, supportive, participative, and goal-oriented, conceptualized by laborers or employees with different deepening. For example, directive leadership is divided into direct

instruction and indirect instruction. Supportive leadership is divided into formal and non-formal regulations; participative leadership includes the partnership aspect and the democratic aspect, and goal-oriented leadership consists of personal and company achievements [24].

5.1. Directive Leadership

Directive leadership is divided into direct instruction, including obstacles, giving examples, and competency. Indirect instruction includes personal ego, company interest, and family relativeness. Fig. 3 details the components of directive leadership.
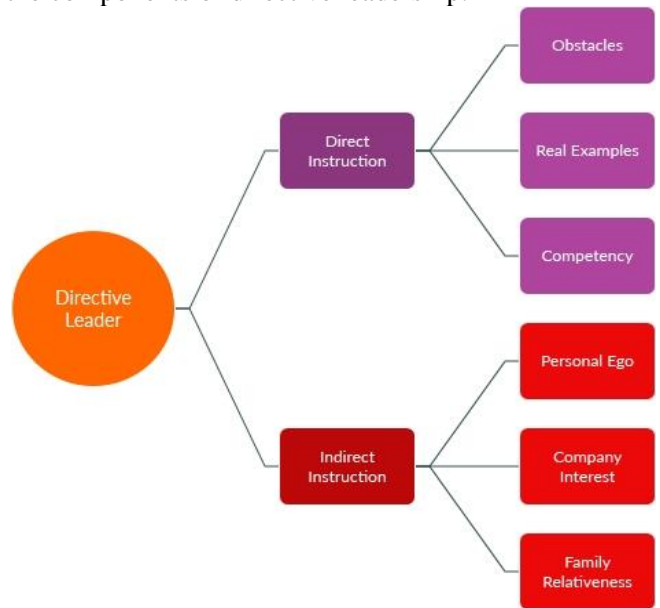

Fig. 3 Visualization of the directive leadership

Laborers or employees conceptualize directive leadership as a type of leader with direct and indirect instruction. Directive skills are needed since laborers tend to be lazy to take the initiative. It does not mean that they are not creative; however, the laborers have bigger challenges or obstacles. Especially if their leaders still have family ties with the owners, the position of laborers will be more vulnerable to being fired if they force their demands. The safest way is they obey the regulations applied by the government [25]. This fact is in line with the idea that differences in business owners impact differences in access and compensation [26].

5.2. Supportive Leadership

Supportive leadership is divided into formal regulations, including standard operation procedures, skill-oriented, and professionalism. Non-formal regulations include personal relations and a sense of belonging. Fig. 4 describes the elaboration of supportive leadership.
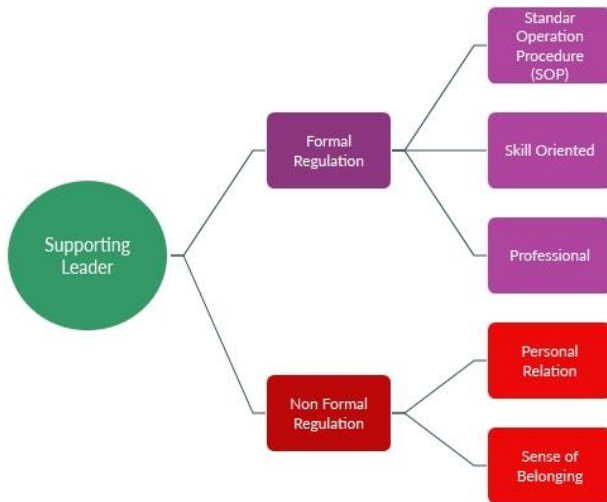
Fig. 4 Visualization of supportive leadership

Laborers or employees conceptualize supportive leadership that leaders must carry out organizational obligations based on clear procedures or rules. Every decision must be taken professionally and responsibly to foster a sense of belonging to the organization. Leaders must be skill-oriented in placing people according to measurable job descriptions. Parameters like this align with studies that professionalism is important for company sustainability and performance or organizational stability remains good [27].

5.3. Participative Leadership

Participative leadership includes top-down aspects that consist of partnership, negotiation, and democratic aspects. The democratic aspect consists of consultative, impartial, and cooperation sub-aspects. Fig. 5 describes participative leadership.
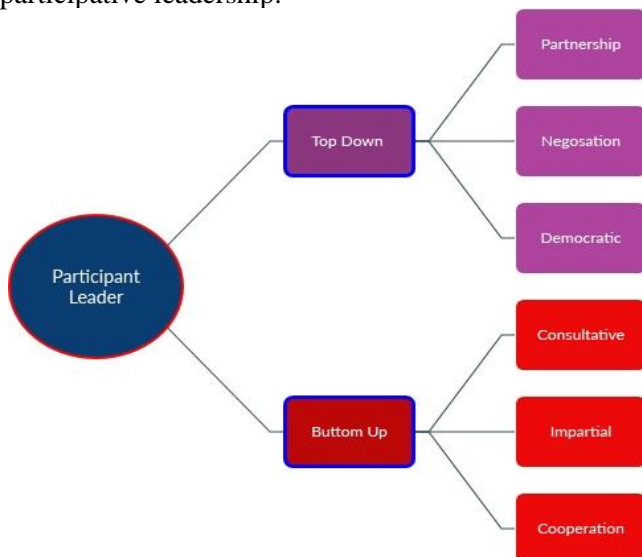

Fig. 5 Visualization of participative leadership

Laborers or employees describe participative leadership by opening up input from lower levels. Leaders facilitate protests or demonstrations as a natural form of freedom of association and freedom of expression. In certain cases, workers can negotiate when the company plans to increase their regional

wages. This possibility reinforces the perception that even though the leadership is sometimes authoritarian, it can also open a room for consultations at certain times. In other words, laborers construct their conception of leadership as rigid-flexible. This leadership character is in line with the view that leadership must be democratic, fair in competition, or impartial [28].

5.4. Goal-Oriented Leadership

Goal-oriented leadership consists of personal achievement, including emotional, unfair, and subjective sub-aspects. Meanwhile, the company achievement consists of problem-solving, motivational employees, and teamwork. Fig. 6 describes goal-oriented leadership.
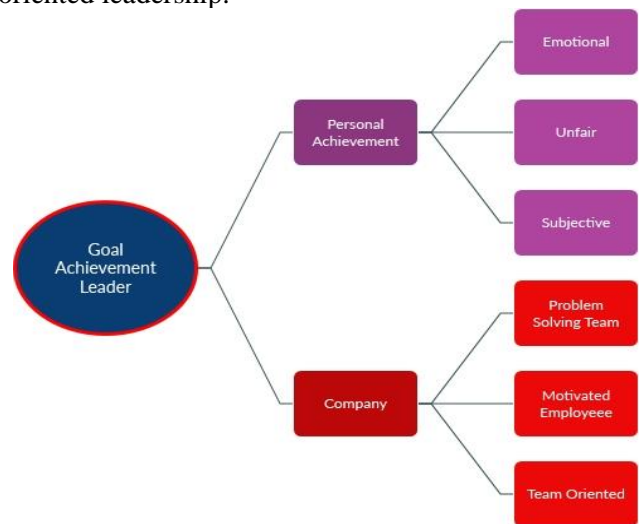

Fig. 6 Visualization of the goal-oriented leadership

Laborers or employees conceptualize goal-oriented leadership with three descriptions. First, the leader is the teamwork leader. Leaders in making decisions must be objective, not subjective, or take unfair actions. Leaders must be problem solvers, not troublemakers [29]. Most importantly, laborers expect that leaders must motivate employees so that organizational goals are achieved. The strategic roles of leaders are in line with the idea that employee-leadership relations must be managed wisely and professionally [30].

6. Conclusion

Two main conclusions were drawn in this study, including the research objectives and the basic assumptions of the research. This study explored a description of the concept of path-goal theory leadership, which emphasizes motivational abilities in terms of directives, supportive, participative, and goal-oriented laborers' perspectives. Furthermore, the research objectives were confirmed through two basic research assumptions. First, the type of leadership determines the goals of the organization. Second, the type of leadership plays an important role in motivating the laborers of the company. The findings of this study reveal laborers conceptualize the directive leadership

that the leader is responsible for managing the organization even though it seems anti-democratic. The position of subsistence workers is very vulnerable in expressing their opinions. Laborers conceptualize supportive leadership as an action that is completely procedural and ambiguous. Employees who become leaders represent the interests of laborers and act as parties who represent management/owners. The participative leadership further confirms the directive leadership, which tends to be anti-democratic, but negotiations are still open. While goal-oriented leadership is conceptualized that leaders must solve the problem within the company. These four leadership styles simultaneously answer the two basic assumptions of this research, in which each component of leadership determines the achievement of organizational goals. Furthermore, based on empirical data, the type of leadership has an important role in motivating laborers to maximize their responsibilities.

As previously described, this study includes four important matters. *First,* the use of phenomenographic research design was new in organizational communication research studies. So far, phenomenography has only been used for educational-based research. However, this research design is very relevant to be applied in research on communication studies. *Second*, research on organizational leadership mostly focused on perceptions constructed from the leaders' perspective. Only a few have studied it from workers' perspectives. Even though workers are an important element in business enterprises, workers' voices were often neglected. This situation brought a new comprehension that the conceptions of leadership and workers emphasize four aspects as described above. This fact proves that organizational or company regulations often give advantages to those with bigger authorities. *Third,* the path-goal theory is a relatively widely-used theory for research with a positivistic/quantitative approach to test the influence between variable X and variable Y. This theory has rarely been used in qualitative research, which focuses on exploring the purposes of the activities. *Fourth,* the constructive/interpretive paradigm only focuses on studies in a small scope. However, ideographically the results of this research can be adapted to similar problems in different contexts as a reference.

7. Limitations

The limitation of this study is the conception constructed by laborers or employees in seeing leadership. Empirical facts show that the conception of workers is very different from the expectations of the leaders. This research is still limited to private companies. Since this research is qualitative, the conclusions are inductive and specific. They cannot be generalized to a wider research object. The contribution of research results includes practical and theoretical implications. Practical contributions relate to reference for policymakers in the medium-scale business sector. The theoretical contribution of this study is adding the body of knowledge of the study on path-goal theory leadership from a laborers' perspective with phenomenographic research and organizational communication study.

Another limitation of this study relates to the fact that this study was conducted during the Covid-19 Pandemic. Some informants had to undergo strict health protocols to participate in this study. Only the data triangulation process was conducted using virtual interviews because informants refused to be interviewed face-to-face.

Acknowledgments

Declaration of Ownership

This report is our original work.

Ethical Clearance

Our institutions approved this study.

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