

Community empowerment in leading *pesantren*: A research of *Nyai*'s leadership

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ABSTRACT

Leadership is one of the essential factors that can influence community involvement in realizing the character of male and female students in the *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools) in Jambi, Indonesia. This study proposed *Nyai*'s (female religious leaders in the *pesantren*) charismatic, economic, and social responsibility leadership models in the context of community empowerment (CE). This quantitative research aimed to determine the contribution of *Nyai*'s leadership models to CE. The data from the questionnaire were analyzed using path and flowchart analysis. The results showed that the three *Nyai*'s leadership models in this study influenced and contributed to CE to support the *pesantren*'s activities and programs. This study recommended adopting the three *Nyai*'s leadership models in empowering the community in the *pesantren*.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Women's leadership has been a passionate topic in Indonesia, where women are still considered weak and unworthy leaders in both public and domestic sectors [1]-[3]. *Nyai* (female religious leaders in the *pesantren*/Islamic boarding school) in the literature about women's leadership is an interesting issue to study, especially since it is related to the sensitive topic of 'women' in leadership roles within the Islamic religion. The assumption that men are leaders and women should take care of the domestic sector is still controversial in the Islamic religion. This opinion was reinforced by Cerrato and Cifre [4], who stated that the role of humans was divided into two areas: public (*al-wilayah al-'amah*) and domestic (*al-wilayah al-khashah*) sectors. Cerrato and Cifre asserted that the public sector is generally the place of men, whereas the household sector is the place of women. This means that there are positives and negatives regarding women's leadership in *pesantren*. This debate is interesting since, in the leadership of a *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools) with a strong Islamic tradition, it should be led by a *Kyai* (a male religious expert or leader in Islam). In fact, the *pesantren* of Ainul Yaqin Jambi is led by a *Nyai* [5].

There are two terms for women's leadership in the *pesantren*: *Nyai* and *Badal Nyai*. *Nyai* is a female family member closest to *Kyai*, while *Badal Nyai* is a young *Nyai* who takes on a female teacher's role.

Hidayah and Arifi noted that *Nyai* is the usual term for a *Kyai's* wife. *Kyai* and *Nyai* are sources of advice for the *santri* (individuals who practice a more conventional version of Islam) at the *pesantren* [6]. The personal relations between the *santri* and *Kyai* and *Nyai* are united by a sense of religion so that *karamah* (honor or regard from God) and *barakah* (a blessing power) are developed.

Previous studies related to *Nyai's* leadership focused more on the leadership style. Researchers have yet to attempt to link *Nyai's* leadership to community empowerment. Rahayu and Faraz discussed the type of *Nyai's* leadership to preserve the *Kitab Kuning* (the traditional set of the Islamic manuscripts), as evidenced by the dominance of charismatic and democratic types. Rahayu and Faraz concluded that *Nyai's* leadership style prioritized work and authoritarian orientation [7]. This study suggests, in agreement with Hidayah and Arifi [6], that the leadership of *pesantren* should be fixated on the religious leaders and more creative development of the *pesantren* economic program.

Marks and Printy discussed some dominant factors that influence women's leadership: social, cultural, and political supports [3]. Hernawati stated that "women leaders on average manifest values, effective leadership styles... Because of the remaining prejudicial barriers, women face challenges as leaders that men do not face, especially in settings where female leaders are nontraditional" [8].

Hernawati also showed immense attractiveness in *Nyai's* leadership because this leadership model adopts a charismatic leadership style [8]. Meanwhile, Muflichah and Muhaemin indicated that *Nyai's* leadership style was more like a charismatic leadership style characterized by always teaching goodness and worship [9], [10]. *Nyai* also demonstrates a collective leadership pattern based on modern management rules by delegating authority.

Budiwiranto and Elfira, in contrast, described the contribution and position of *Nyai* [11], [12]. They concluded that many *Nyais* already had leadership roles in the *pesantren*. Furthermore, with the responsiveness, determination, and creativity of *Nyai's* leadership, they built religious authority and the *pesantren's* development. *Nyai's* works also refer to the awareness of feminism by reflecting on personal experiences and efforts as women and scholars. This belief has roots in the *pesantren* tradition of empowerment, independence, and tolerance of diversity. Chusniyah, *et al.* explained that *Nyai's* leadership roles include domestic and public leadership roles [13]. Hidayah and Arifi indicated that *Nyai's* charismatic leadership type dominated *Nyai's* leadership [6]. There is rare research that relates *Nyai's* leadership to community empowerment especially related to charismatic, economic, and social responsibility models, not is there any such research that encourages such a link as an essential part that has to be built by *Nyai* as a leader in a *pesantren*. This is important because a *pesantren*, as an educational institution, is responsible for religious education and empowering the community and students to expand the students' capacity. The term community empowerment refers to the involvement of people outside of the *pesantren* to initiate improvement of the *pesantren's* social situation and conditions. Thus, community empowerment is interpreted as an effort to encourage the community to help develop the *pesantren*. The focus of the study is *Nyai's* leadership concerning community empowerment. The concern of this research is to raise the lifeblood of the *pesantren*. Therefore, *Nyai's* leadership is the primary key to this empowerment. The purpose of the study is to determine the contribution of *Nyai's* leadership to community empowerment.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The leadership of women normatively has substantial legitimacy, theologically, philosophically, and legally, for example, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that women should be granted the freedom to choose and be elected as leaders. Laws of the Republic of Indonesia UU RI No.7/1984, which concerns eliminating all forms of discrimination against women, and Laws of the Republic of Indonesia (UU RI) No. 39/1999 which involves human rights, has guaranteed women's representation in the Legislative, Executive, and Judiciary branches. Presidential Instruction No.9/2000 on gender mainstream requires all national development policies and programs to be designed based on gender [14].

Empowerment is expected to be the primary goal of developing the *pesantrens*. Empowerment encourages and attracts all participation of *pesantren* residents to change the *pesantren* area so that it can be recognized from the outside. Community empowerment has proven to be a practical approach to solving various community problems [15], [16]. Cattaneo and Chapman defined empowerment as an effort to build relationships of strength and competence of a person, use nature, and take proactive action on change and social policies [17]. They further said that community empowerment is developing and strengthening an individual's ability to participate in sustainable community development. Indicators of growth in people's capacity and motivation to solve problems and their ability to make decisions freely according to their choices. Previous studies also defined community empowerment as a form of tangible assistance and adequate knowledge for unity at the initial stage of introduction [16], [18]. The model suggested by Iskandarini in community empowerment by expanding leadership attention to the community is social capital

development based on collaboration or cooperation [19]. A community is a group of people who may be linked spatially and share common interests, concerns, and identities [20].

In the empowerment paradigm, Huis, *et al.* stated that society is empowered when it has strength, including power, cognitive, psychological, economic, and political [21]. From this empowerment paradigm, previous studies stated that psychologically charismatic leadership considers examples of behavioral models through the words and deeds of the leader to be a key determinant of charismatic relationships [22], [23]. Cogliser, *et al.* likewise said that the spread of responsibility and member activities would stimulate a collective performance level [24].

Based on the paradigm of empowerment, it can be concluded that community empowerment is more influenced by charisma, economic factors, and social responsibility built by *Nyai* as a leader in a *pesantren*. This factor then allows a *pesantren* to develop. Thus, these factors become a model of leadership in community empowerment. *Pesantren* with weak empowerment can be empowered through the leadership model offered, increased knowledge, and participation to develop. After that, the empowerment process will continue until it achieves sustainable empowerment, namely, developing a *pesantren*, as in the theoretical framework adapted from Sianipar, *et al.* [25] as seen in Figure 1.

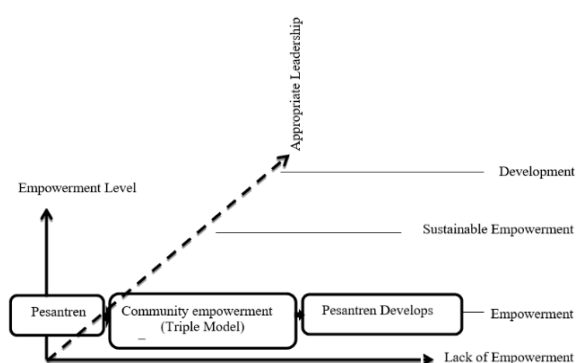


Figure 1. Stages of the empowerment process

Regarding *pesantren*, many experts who define *pesantren* generally agree that a *pesantren* is a place for male and female students to live and conduct Islamic religious studies [26], [27], for example, some experts stated that technically the *pesantren* is a residence for students who are thoroughly learning. He added that there are also *pesantren* whose students do not live in the dormitories but live in their respective homes because they are *santri kalong* (local residents who only participate in study at the *pesantren*). Thus, a *pesantren* can be understood as a place used by *Kyai*, *Nyai*, and *santri* in carrying out their daily activities.

Apart from the *pesantren* as a residence for students [1], [26], [27], the *pesantren* tradition has a great tradition in Indonesia in the field of Islamic teaching, which aims to transmit traditional Islam values. In the era of globalization, a *pesantren* must modify the *pesantren's* objectives with the needs of society as institutions for empowering and fostering people. Previous researchers likewise stated that at the end of the 20th century, the establishment of the *pesantren* is different from the past [26]–[30]. In the past, a *pesantren* stood at the same time as the forerunner to establishing local villages. Now, the *pesantren* is established in a village or community environment that is already busy or advanced.

Ma'arif, regarding leadership, stated that women have the same responsibility as men in building the society, nation, and the world [31]. With many intellectual, social, emotional, and professional skills and abilities possessed by women, they can contribute to the nation's future civilization. He states at least three roles and functions of women: the natural, economic, and social roles. Natural roles refer to reproductive roles such as pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding, or roles that are not worth money. The economic role is understood as a productive role (multiple roles) where women work in the household (unpaid) or outside the home (paid). The social role is interpreted as the role of women in a social context with various roles in various sectors and success in managing the household.

In the *pesantren*, *Nyai* is the central figure. She has the authority and is the center of policy and change in the *pesantren*. Therefore, any changes or reforms made in the *pesantren* should come from the *pesantren's* willingness. In this case, *Nyai* plays an important role. Thus, the main characteristics of *Nyai's* appearance are her charisma, economic prowess, and social responsibility.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

This study was conducted in boarding school Ainul Yakin in the Jambi Province, Indonesia using a mixed-methods design. A quantitative method was used in this study [32], [33]. In this study, the primary quantitative data was obtained using a questionnaire to explore variables with a partial and simultaneous influence on community empowerment. The preliminary data were analyzed using path analysis with SPSS 20.0. The supporting data are the charismatic, economic, and social responsibility characteristics of *Nyai's* leadership model. The data were analyzed using flowchart analysis [34]. This mixed-methods approach was adopted to understand better the forms of empowerment practiced by *Nyai* in the *pesantren*. The sample of this study was 75 participants that consist of one *Nyai*, 15 teachers and six students at the *pesantren*, and 53 people of the community around the *pesantren*.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Results

The proposed hypotheses are: i) Charismatic model (X_1) has a direct influence on CE (Y); ii) Economic model (X_2) has a direct influence on CE (Y); iii) Charismatic model (X_1) and economic model (X_2) have a simultaneous direct influence on CE (Y); iv) Charismatic model (X_1) partially and simultaneously has a direct influence on social responsibility (X_3); v) Economic model (X_2) has a direct influence on social responsibility (X_3); vi) Charismatic model (X_1) and economic model (X_2) simultaneously have a direct influence on social responsibility (X_3); vii) Social responsibility (X_3) have a direct influence on CE (Y); (viii) Charismatic model (X_1), economic model (X_2), and social responsibility (X_3) simultaneously have a direct influence on CE (Y); and ix) Charismatic model (X_1) has a direct influence on community empowerment (Y) through social responsibility (X_3), and economic model (X_2) have a direct influence on CE (Y) through social responsibility (X_3). Statistical analysis was performed through correlation, regression, and path analysis.

The statistical analysis, followed by qualitative analysis, was carried out to provide meaning and conclusions from the data on *Nyai's* leadership model in the *pesantren*; they are charismatic, economic, and social responsibility models. The results are shown by descriptive analysis and hypothesis testing of the CE variable data (Y), the variable data of charismatic model (X_1), the variable data of economic model (X_2), and the variable data of social responsibility model (X_3). The findings can be concluded in Table 1.

Table 1. Analysis of descriptive research

No	Description	X_1	X_2	X_3	Y
1	Minimum	86	89	60	74
2	Maximum	140	139	158	138
3	Mean	110.44	112.1867	102.2933	101.4
4	Median	108	111	100	101
5	Mode	95	100	98	101
6	Std. deviation	12.9586	12.57915	22.21989	16.3674
7	Variance	167.925	158.235	493.724	267.892
8	Std. error of mean	1.49633	1.45251	2.56573	1.88994
9	Range	54	50	98	64
10	Summary	8283	8414	7672	7605

X_1 =charismatic model; X_2 =economic model; X_3 =social responsibility; Y=community empowerment (CE)

There were five hypotheses in this study. First, the social responsibility variable (X_3) to CE (Y) is 70.70%. Second, the charismatic variable (X_1) to CE (Y) is 59.00%. Then, the charismatic variable (X_1) on social responsibility (X_3) is 40.70%. Next, the economic variable (X_2) through CE (Y) is 32.70%. The economic variable (X_2) through social responsibility (X_3) is 25.90%. Meanwhile, simultaneously, it is known from the statistical analysis that the variables which gave the most significant influence are: Charismatic (X_1), economic (X_2), and social responsibility (X_3) variables to CE (Y) is 74.50%; charismatic (X_1) and economic (X_2) through CE (Y) variables is 66.80%, and charismatic (X_1) and economic (X_2) variables through social responsibility (X_3) variables is 34.90%.

For the intervening variables (mediating variables), from the statistical analysis, it is known that the most influential variables are: Charismatic variable (X_1) through social responsibility (X_3) to CE (Y) is 28.77%; and Economic variable (X_2) through social responsibility (X_3) to CE (Y) is 18.31%. Based on these findings, the leadership practiced by *Nyai* in CE in the *pesantren* can be classified into three leadership models: charismatic, economic, and social responsibility models. The charismatic model is a leadership model that emphasizes personal charisma as a leader in managing and leading the *pesantren*. Meanwhile, the economic model is a leadership model that emphasizes economic factors to strengthen leadership. The social

responsibility model is a leadership model that emphasizes the social responsibility of the community, which is reflected in the behavior of people who care about social activities. Table 2 shows the charismatic, economic, and social responsibility leadership models practiced by *Nyai's* leadership in *pesantren*.

Table 2. Analysis of descriptive research

No	Data coverage	Interpretation/code
1	Trust, delegate, togetherness, spirit, respect, religiosity, obeying, and spirituality	Charismatic model
2	Alms, concern, afterlife investment, funding, building facilities, logistics, the poor and destitute	Economic model
3	Orientation, time allocation, responsibility, social control, response structuring, participation, connection, and idealism	Social responsibility model

The characteristics of *Nyai's* leadership with a charismatic model as shown in Figure 2 in the *pesantren* are reflected in the attitude of trust, delegation, togetherness, enthusiasm, respect, religious obedience, obedience, and community spirituality towards the *pesantren* leadership. All of this is a driving force that emerges from a charismatic leadership model, allowing people to have concern for the *pesantren*. Figure 2 shows 40% of *Nyai's* leadership model is charismatic in the form of trust; the rest is spirit (16%), togetherness (10%), spirituality (9%), respect (8%), obeying (7%), religiosity (5%), and delegate (5%).

The characteristics of *Nyai's* leadership with an economic model as shown in Figure 3 in the *pesantren* are reflected in the ability to encourage and activate awareness for alms, raise concerns, encourage investment in the hereafter, encourage funding, building facilities, logistics, and attention to *santri* with a low-income family background (needy and poor). These things become the driving force that emerges from an economic leadership model, allowing people to have concern for the *pesantren*. Figure 3 shows 44% of economically *Nyai's* leadership model in the form of logistics, the remaining building facilities (27%), funding (20%), investment in the hereafter (5%); the rest is a concern, almsgiving, and the conditions of the poor, respectively (1%).

The characteristics of *Nyai's* leadership with the social responsibility model in the *pesantren* are reflected in the ability to encourage and realize orientation, time allocation, responsibility, social control, response structuring, participation, connection, and idealism. These things are the driving force that emerges from the leadership model of social responsibility, allowing people to have concern for the *pesantren*. Figure 4 shows 38% of *Nyai's* leadership model in terms of social responsibility in the form of responsibility, social control (13%), orientation (12%), time allocation (9%), participation (9%), connection (8%), response structuring (7%), and idealism (4%).

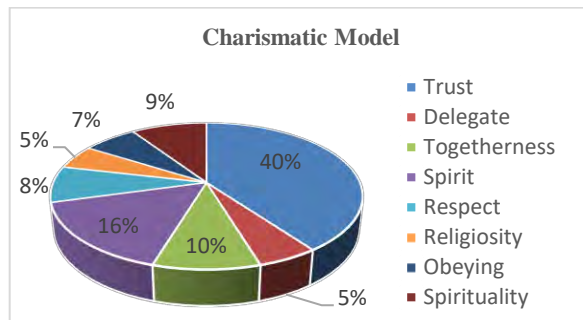


Figure 2. Charismatic models

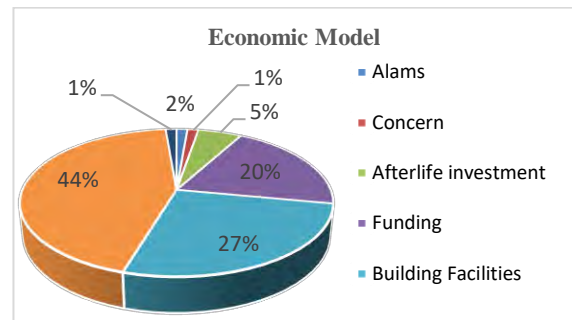


Figure 3. Economic models

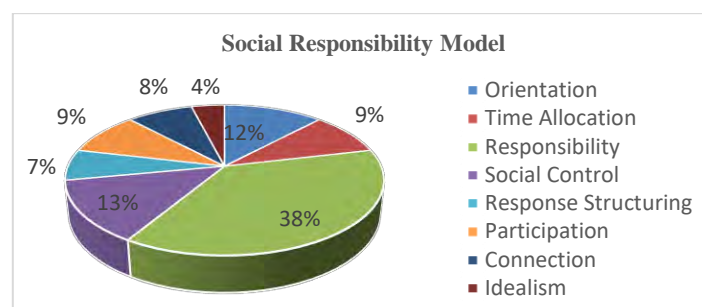


Figure 4. Social responsibility models

4.2. Discussion

Nyai's leadership model in the context of community empowerment in the *pesantren* shows a significant effect both partially and simultaneously. The leadership models offered are the charismatic model, economic model, and social responsibility model. The charismatic model value is measured from trust, delegate, togetherness, spirit, respect, religiosity, obeying, and spirituality. The economic model value is calculated from alms, concern, afterlife investment, funding, building facilities, logistics, and the poor and destitute, while the social responsibility model value is measured from orientation, time allocation, responsibility, social control, response structuring, participation, and connection and idealism.

From these three *Nyai's* leadership models, several studies indicated that *Nyai's* leadership was dominated by charismatic leadership type [8], [14], [35]. Even from the research, Hidayah and Arifin have shown the type of *Nyai's* leadership to preserve the *Kitab Kuning* (traditional Islamic manuscripts) as evidenced by the dominance of charismatic and democratic types [6]. Sosik stated that charismatic leadership considers examples of behavioral models through the leader's words and deeds to be a key determinant of charismatic relationships [23]. Therefore, community empowerment research in the *pesantren* needs to consider behavioral models like trust, delegate, togetherness, spirit, respect, religiosity, obeying, and spirituality. Previous studies proved that the charismatic leadership model is essential in encouraging community empowerment in *pesantren* situations [6], [29], [30]. The *pesantren* leaders' charisma is the driving force for the emergence of public interest and attention towards the *pesantren* and the empowerment of the *pesantren* [36].

Concerning the economic model, Huis, *et al.* stated that society is empowered when it has strength, including power, cognitive, psychological, economic, and political [21]. Therefore, economic model research empowering the community needs to consider five aspects; power, cognitive, psychological, economic, and political to be alms, concern, afterlife investment, funding, building facilities, logistics, and the poor and destitute can run as expected in the *pesantren*. According to Sianipar, *et al.*, this model can only be done if the leader believes that the community shares common interests, concerns, and identities [25]. That is why Sianipar *et al.* explained empowerment to build relationships of strength and competence of a person, use nature, and take proactive action on change and social policies. He further said that community empowerment is a process of developing and strengthening the ability to participate in sustainable community development [25]. To make that happen, several researchers suggested that the leadership of the *pesantren* should not only be fixated on leader figures but be more creative in developing the *pesantren's* economic program [7], [9]. Thus, it needs the creativity of the *pesantren* leadership to develop economic status in the *pesantren*, which also affects society's economy [37]–[39].

The *pesantren* economic leadership model is needed to strengthen the *pesantren*, especially from the aspect of empowerment. From existing research, it is known that this is only possible and can be done if *pesantren* leaders can build relationship strength and personal competence, use of resources, and proactive action and social policies. Creativity is the keyword in the development of the *pesantren* economic program.

The social responsibility model is illustrated by the value of orientation, time allocation, responsibility, social control, response structuring, participation, connection, and idealism. Hidayah and Arifin described that the success of women's leadership is influenced by dominant factors they are social, cultural, and political supports [6]. Even, Harvey complemented that with this responsiveness, determination, and creativity, *Nyai's* leadership built religious authority and *pesantren's* development [40].

In the social responsibility model, building values and factors that can influence social responsibility is essential in empowering the community. Therefore, the values and factors that can foster social responsibility must continue to be promoted by the *pesantren's* leadership. Moreover, *Nyai*, as the leader of the *pesantren*, is a person who has religious authority and is the spearhead of the future of the *pesantren*.

The discussion about community empowerment based on *Nyai's* leadership models has been constructed as models in the *pesantren*. Community empowerment is significantly affected by the application of *Nyai's* leadership model in the *pesantren*. Therefore, Sianipar, *et al.* state empowerment is expected to be the primary goal of developing the *pesantren*. Empowerment encourages and attracts all participation of the *pesantren* residents to change the *pesantren's* world so that it can be recognized from the outside. Sianipar, *et al.* stated that community empowerment has proven to be a practical approach to solving various community problems [25]. The aspects offered from each of *Nyai's* leadership models are essential to empower the *pesantren* community. These aspects increase public understanding and awareness to contribute to the development of the *pesantren*.

The study's findings demonstrate Antonakis theory, which states that charismatic leadership considers examples of behavioral models through the leader's words and deeds to be critical determinants of charismatic relationships [41]. It is reasonable that this research suggested the triple models (charismatic, economic, and social responsibility) in empowering community in leading *pesantren* at Ainul Yakin. It also shows that the theory of Coglisier, *et al.* that the spread of responsibility and member activity will help to a

higher level of collective performance [24]. Thus, the effectiveness of *Nyai*'s leadership needs to consider the existence of charisma, build economic factors as strengthening, and spread social responsibility to the community to build community empowerment in the *pesantren* in a sustainable manner for the development of the *pesantren*.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the ten hypotheses explained, all indicate that the variables, either partially or simultaneously, significantly affect the community empowerment variable. This means that the three *Nyai*'s leadership models in this study influence and contribute to community empowerment to support the *pesantren*'s activities and programs. This can be seen in the three *Nyai*'s leadership models; they are charismatic model characterized by community trust, economic model by community assistance in the form of logistics, and social responsibility model by community responsibility for the *pesantren*. Therefore, charismatic, economic, and social responsibility models of *Nyai*'s leadership can be used as a reference in effective community empowerment in the *pesantren*.

Based on the findings of *Nyai*'s leadership model applied in the *pesantren*, it is significantly able to empower the community. Therefore, it is vital to maintain these three *Nyai*'s leadership models. However, it should be noted here that each leadership model has both advantages and disadvantages. It would be ideal for review, understanding, and mastery of various leadership models that occur through the *Pesantren* leadership process. Every time problems arise from the *Nyai* leadership model; problems can be solved using multiple leadership models, including charismatic, economic, and social responsibility models. It is also recommended for further study to take another example of *pesantren* in which the *Nyai* has a strategic position in community empowerment. It is also recommended for further study to take another example of *pesantren* in which *Nyai* has strategic position in community empowerment.

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