Problems, Pitfalls and Progresses of 21st Century Leadership from the Asian Perspective: A Qualitative Content Analysis

Dr. Teck Choon, TEO[1] and Prof. Dr. Kim Cheng Patrick, LOW[2]

[1]*Associate Dean, RVi Institute, Mandalay, Myanmar*
Postdoctoral Researcher

[2]*Chartered Marketer, Certified MBTI Administrator,*
& Certified Behavioural Consultant/Visiting Professor, University of the South Pacific.
Professor, Dean, Construction Technologies and Management & Director, Scientific Center, Kazakh American University (KAU) & Kazakh Leading Academy of Architecture & Civil Engineering (KazGASA) (end May 2017 to early Jan 2018)

Abstract

Leaders of the 21st century need to serve and have higher interests other than their self-interest(s). Having a serve and service-mind, they are there to serve for the betterment of mankind. Given the tremendous changes in business, social landscapes coupled with technology advances, the contemporary wisdom to initiate change is being replaced by the symbiotic drive towards alignment, collaboration, empowerment, and service. A cognizant organisation which cares for its employees and its environment necessitates leadership that is self-aware and gravitates towards sustainable business, or a green business vis-à-vis—a business that strives to meet the triple bottom line. Its leadership thrives in relationships within the organisation and not in prima-donna style and ways. For example, when these relationships flourish, employees are engaged, inspired, and committed.

Keywords: *Leadership pitfalls, Leadership progresses; 21st century leadership.*

I. INTRODUCTION

What are 21st century leadership skills and why is it important for future leaders to have these traits?This is a very complex question as it has many facets and degrees of how we as individuals or organisations perceive the difficulties or troubles we experience. Regrettably, we are judged by our success (as leaders) whether we like it or not. If there is a" no-win" situation or dire predicament, then we must generate ideas on how can we alter the way we think, act and lead in order to facilitate a "win-win" situation? This is where 21st century leadership emerges, not as defined in the present time as hierarchical.

It can be argued that leadership can be viewed as our personal and/or shared collective response to change the world for the better. Hence, a cognisant understanding and practice of leadership responsive to this world is needed given today's highly interdependent world, highly complex and indeed volatile business landscape. 21st century leadership is characterised by a perspective of leadership intended to respond to the unique challenges and opportunities of today's world.

According to Rost (1991), reflective of an expanded paradigm of leadership, it draws upon and integrates theories and practices from a wide range of disciplines and traditions to foster practical knowledge and transformative change in service of the world (p.126).

A leader of the future understands and accepts the reality that new work attitude of the new workforce. He/she recognises that while market volatility can be expected, diversity is here to stay; work cultures will be redefined; having USPs will determine our business survival; and holistic sustainable approaches are expected. Fundamentally, this leader is willing to engage with other members of their organisation or community in order to facilitate better ways of living and doing business.Intrinsic leaders, who have learned to reframe their perspective to see organisations as an open book, are inspired to plant seeds of innovation, growth, and contribution in their people.Invariably, this approach galvanises members to rise to greater levels of staff engagements and productivity of the organisation.

Truly change and innovation becomes a reality of daily interactions. Shifting the mind-sets to that of co-creation with nature rather than exploitation, and teaming up with life and vitality rather than fighting them while creating the space for abundance, greenness and sustainable growth.

II. LEADERSHIP PROBLEMS AND PITFALLS

Rather than shifting focus from the past to future possibilities, the leader continues to embrace a mechanistic approach based on efficiencies. They are blinded by past success and do not appreciate the daily phenomena in the company, thus inhibiting its survival. By not inviting imagination and co-creation, they cannot break the social constructs of the past and create space for breakthrough ideas. The leader selfishly prefers to focus in deficit based narratives rather than crafts the company conversation around hope, trust, possibilities and abundance. In essence, they do have a continued desire of encouragement and ownership culture. The authenticity and sincerity of the leader is contagious vis-à-vis they are no longer attracted to the new way of being and organising, reshaping the structures and systems to be the *best-in-class.*

Given that our business environment is far more complex than before; strategies that were successful and effective are now seemingly inappropriate. This necessitates leaders to have a deeper understanding and broader range of leadership skillsets, notwithstanding interdisciplinary knowledge which are crucial for success. As leaders we must confront the difficult and often diabolical issues, otherwise, what am I doing to improve my leadership skills and practices? Leaders who contend to "bull-doze" through the multifaceted quandary, and not understanding or respecting the roles played by others, is a recipe for leadership failure. Leadership is a process in which everyone's destinyisintertwined.

A. Disregard "Saving Face" Mentality

In Asian cultures, this concept is a core social fabric and its meaning has remained consistent across time. "Saving Face" connotes a desire to avoid humiliation or embarrassment, and to maintain dignity or preserve one's status (Lee & Peterson 2001, Merkin, Taras& Steel 2014). This mentality is often at odds with the Western inclination to freely speak one's mind; Western business people are alerted to avoid inadvertently embarrassing or opposing their Asian counterpartswhen doing business (Hugh-Jones 2015, Richard and McFadden 2015).The emerging leaders must not be afraid to show their vulnerability as this will promote a culture of openness and objectivity. Emerging leaders must tenacity to accept that openness about their own strengths and limitations will ultimately help them grow.Given the chaotic business climate, leaders must take assertive steps to identify the organisational deficiencies and appraise the effectiveness of their organisation development.With more than half of the world's population living in Asia, who speak multiple languages and dialects and represent a multitude of cultures, the Asian region is a complex place to do business. Leaders must have deep knowledge with a host of societal, cultural, and religious differences among each country's distinct ethnic groups. Leaders who can manage effectively while respecting employees' and customers' multifaceted diversity are the ones who thrive and create/add value for their organisations.

B. Ignore Abilities and Competence

Rather than ignoring competences and favouring the incompetents, there is a need for people or more specifically for leaders of "san laosiyan" (3 "olds" and 4 "stricts") (Low, 2017). The "olds" are honesty in (i) thought, (ii) deed and (iii) words while the 4 "stricts" are strict standards for (i) work, (ii) organisation and (iii) attitude and (iv) observation of discipline.

Ignoring these will result in recruiting and selecting and having leaders who are well-dressed monkeys or orang-utans or essentially incompetents whoare proverbially referred to in Chinese as "restless monkeys in tall hats" ("Worthless people dressed as dignitaries") (Mah, 2003).

C. Forget Exclusiveness

Leaders are inclined to put barriers. And here, they need to remove or reduce such barriers (be it office sizes, language and jargons, pay and perks and the likes) between them and their people; they should by any account not be exclusive or be an enclave unto themselves.

D. Disregard the Impersonal and 'Stoned', Unconnected Relationships between the Leaders and the People

These days of high tech/low touch (i.e. through the "robot economy", "digital transformation" and mechanical procedures, work life gets impersonal and cold; Tang, 2018; Low, 2018, 2013), there is little connectivity. There is thus a need to relive connections and make alive relationships as well as bonding between the leaders and the people and the latter amongst themselves too. Certainly, there is a need to up the "connectivity" and human creativity (Tang, 2018).Bonding or good relationships between the leaders and the people should always be encouraged.

E. Close the Eyes to Routine and Lack of Creativity

Rather than just doing routines, simply waiting for instructions or merely operating at a pedestrian level, the motivated, inspired and enthused employees must be up and rising with novel ideas and creative ways to boost output and productivity while raising quality and differentiating the organisation/ the Company.In order to facilitate real change, it will necessitate leaders of the

future to craft out a list of culture statements that will become the foundation for the organisation. Radical statements such as fundamental shift in thinking vis-à-vis embrace disappointments and uncertainties; be the first to experiment, be tenacious and courageous to try new things.

Conversely, it is important for employees to know that they are working in a safe environment and the making mistakes and pushing the boundaries are the norm. In empowering enterprises to go further, risk aversion is often built into the culture. A basic tenet in commerce is that we should avoid risk in our business planning and operations, however when the goal is creating something new and innovative, we have to give employees the freedom to take more risk.

Leaders constantly need to be reminded of – "What's the worst case scenario?" Leaders should not be risk-adverse and avoid something just because it might not work. Why not try something new and see what happens. By asking, "why not?" and "what if?" statements help employees push past that wall.

F. Take the Employees or People for Granted/ Do Not Care for Them
Good leadership is practical wisdom (Davis, 2016).

Leaders cannot afford to ignore this, and in fact, they should proactively look after and care for the people. As leader, one must not take the employees or people for granted.

The culture of an organisation is closely tied to the quality of its output (Montgomery 2006, Dauber et al 2012). The two most important things leaders can provide to their team are: an inspiring vision that they can rally around, making them motivated to come to work daily,and a robustcorporate culture that encourages collaboration, creatingopportunities for fun, and forgives failure in the search of something great.

G. Ignore Gender-blind Leadership Selection
Many Asian cultures and traditions stress on male dominance/ recruitment and selection in leadership; but if females are not selected for leadership roles based on ability, then this is a waste of talents. There are many capable female leaders too; and all of us must not miss or neglect women power (Low, 2018, 2013).

Leadership should be gender-blind. Widely accredited as the "Mother of Asian Democracy", the late Maria Corazon "Cory" Cojuangco Aquino (January 25, 1933 – August 1, 2009) was a Filipino politician who served as the 11th President of the Philippines. The first woman to hold the Philippines Presidential Office,

Aquino was the most prominent figure of the 1986 People Power Revolution which toppled the 21-year rule of President Ferdinand Marcos (NHCP, 2018).

A Burmese politician, diplomat, and author, and Nobel Peace Prize laureate (1991), Aung San Suu Kyi is the leader of the National League for Democracy and the first and incumbent State Counsellor, a position akin to a prime minister. She is also the first woman to serve as Minister for Foreign Affairs, for the President's Office, for Electric Power and Energy, and for Education. From 2012 to 2016 she was the Member of Parliament for Kawhmu Township to the House of Representatives. Nonetheless, Aung San Suu Kyi was criticized and was asked to "use her remarkable qualities" to end prejudice against Muslim Rohingyas in Rakhine state (BBC, 2017).

And in Singapore case, we can see much progress in the country under Lee Kuan Yew (the Father of Modern Singapore; Low, 2018; 2013), GohChok Tong and Lee Hsien Loong, with the island-Republic moving from the Third World to the First World. However, the most recent criticisms of the present Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong are that of, "(Lee Hsien Loong is) accuse(d)… of abusing power and exploiting their father's (Lee Kuan Yew) legacy for political gains" (CNBC, 2017). And Lee Wei Ling, daughter of Lee Kuan Yew, sister of the current Prime Minister of Singapore also criticized the government as "authoritarian"; saying that "a draft contempt of court bill as 'an attempt to muzzle public opinion'. (Vasagar, 2016).

Besides, "Emeritus Senior Minister GohChok Tong appears to have slammed a suggestion to fund elderly pension by cutting million-dollar ministerial salaries"(https://sgtalk.org/mybb/Thread-Ministers-are-not-paid-enough-%E2%80%9D-%E2%80%93-Goh-Chok-Tong-slams-suggestion-by-cutting-pay); the political leadership appears to take up again the high pay for the leaders, making it so transactional, 'you do the job, you are paid for it' rather than relationships-centeredness between the leaders and the people. Henson (2018) spoke of "reduc(ing) the relationship between the ruler and the ruled into a commercial transaction, based on whether voters thought they were getting their money's worth."

We are no experts but difficult it seems, perhaps, (more) connectivity to people is the key. Citing Niccolo Machiavelli's *The Prince*, Davis (2016, p. 42-43) spoke of, "(Politicians must) get to know the people – if you know little about the territory, it's best to go live there and make yourself accessible…"; "if you must act harshly, do it quickly and "base your rule on

competence and good intent". Moreover, the authors feel that greater understanding of the ground, the people, and inclusiveness must be incorporated in the leaders' style and ways. And the people are more engaged with barriers removed, more dialogues or policies and implementation better explained, and be widely accepted by them while the people's expressions and views be factored in; and indeed they must not be discounted or summarily dismissed.

On the other hand, positively-speaking, in Singapore/Asia, there is often leadership renewal as can be seen from this recent example: Veteran businessman and technology investor Koh Boon Hwee stepped down from his position as non-executive chairman of Far East Hospitality Trust (H-Trust) on June 30, 2018 (Straits Times, 2018).

Leaders need to be more enlightened, and be more selfless, and the veteran leader Koh Boon Hwee once said, "I am attached to the company but being attached to a company means you want it to be the best it possibly can", said Koh. "And as time passes, you want younger people with more up-to-date ideas" (Yap, 2018).

And again, citingNiccolo Machiavelli's *The Prince*, Davis (2016, p. 43) further advised, "(for new leaders,) people will always mistrust anyone new, but the more competent you are and the more you act in your subjects' best interests, the more quickly you'll gain their trust and the more easily they'll accept the change you install. If, on the other hand, you upset a lot of them and they grow to hate you, beware. You won't be around for long."

Interestingly too, Kuan (2018) spoke of Tun Mahathir (in his office from 16 July 1981 to 31 October 2003) as "(he's able) to articulate and effectively convey his idea and messages to people, to convince people to his idea, to be able to exert authority, to motivate the crowd to support his course, to command his followers and willingness to stand up for his country and his people. Mahathir definitely shines at this element"

A fatherly figure, Tun Mahathir Mohamad made a comeback in the last General Elections May 2018, defeating BarisanNasional (BN), as the people see him as knowing the ropes and as an able leader to put glory back to the country. One would say that he is an experienced and good communicator, connecting well with the Malaysian electorate. Pesek (2017) underlined that when Mahathir left office 14 years ago, Malaysia ranked 37th on Transparency International's corruption perceptions index. It's now 55th. Since NajibRazak grabbed the reins, Malaysia has stagnated in competitiveness and innovation rankings.

On the other hand, Kuan (2018) also indicated that Tun Mahathir allowed "his idea on racial stereotypes, nationalism and personal pride muddled the water in his policy and decision making process." True that during Mahathir's first tenure as prime minister, Malaysia underwent an era of rapid modernization and economic growth, and his government started a series of bold infrastructure projects. Mahathir was a chief political figure, winning five uninterrupted general elections and fending off a series of rivals for the leadership of UMNO, but it is said that his accumulation of power came at the price of the independence of the judiciary and the traditional powers and privileges of Malaysia's royalty.

In any case, be it political and/ or corporate leadership, however, more thus needs to (and could) be done, and…

H. Forget the Old Mind-set of Long Work Hours
There is a need to discard the idea that the longer the work, the more loyal the employees towards the organisation. Have the people to work less hours (Tang, 2018, p. 93). Motivate and inspire the people; and get the organisation to be effective, initiate and/ or blaze the trail.

Plainly-speaking, just be able or competent (Davis, 2016).

I. Disregard Being Green
Organisations (nations)keep on consuming, expending and even wasting as well as using and exhausting many resources; and indeed they need to be green and sustainable.

J. Local Action Global Thinking
Given the cultural and linguistic complexity in doing business across vast Asian continent, it is almost impossible to conduct business in the region without crossing national or language borders(Javidan et al 2006, Alon, Higgins and Crummer 2005). Emerging leaders who are exposed early to overseas postings at different stages of their career can accelerate their promotion prospect as it can equip them with a global perspective. In making most of each cross-cultural opportunity through learning the customs, learning to speak the local language, and networking with locals rather than seeking expat communes can extenuate the learning curve.

It is small wonder that leaders must have a holistic understanding of how organisations function beyond the tradition subject domain or mastery. Having the

working knowledge and "walking the talk" will make leaders in tune with operations. An aversion to risk in several Asian cultures, for example can impede innovation and creativity. The Singlish or Hokkien words, kiasi and kiasu which means "fear of death" and "fear of losing" pertinently describes this behaviour. Letting leaders experiencing the diverse roles and taking risks invariably accelerate their learning resulting in unanticipated business success.

III. LEADERSHIP PROGRESSES IN THE 21ST CENTURY CAN BE ACHIEVED THROUGH

A. *Having A Sentient Organisation*

Able leaders are recruited and selected. And more so, having a sentient, able organisation which shows empathy for its people and having the environment that requires competent leadership that is self-aware and centred around natural sustainable principles. Its leadership must be anchored in relationships within the organisation and notindividuals. It is when these relationships flourish that its people are engaged, inspired, and committed. Therefore, the leader must have the ability to set the tone. He/she must finds his/her drive in a passion intimately in tune with the aspirations of the people within the company and global society, but consciously entrenched in him/herself, for example having a clear vision of success and communicates it succinctly to its people.Hence, a leader must be good communicator. Having a shared responsibility and collective aspiration, the organisation is more likely to move forward towards progress, passion, professionalism and pride.

Managers and teams must lead in ways to find a focus, build a plan based on real-world inspirations, and collaborate on effective actions based on teamwork. They lead with views, inputs and suggestions from their people; they engage or involve the people (Stone, 2013) to achieve high output and excellence.

It is worthy to note that employees, who envision, design and implement workplace and process changes are engaged employee; and engaged employees can be committed, productive and performing employees.

B. *Organisational (National) Effectiveness*

Organisational (national) effectiveness scholar Edward Lawler and his colleagues identified four interlocking principles for building a high-involvement work system that help to ensure that the system will be effective and that the various practices will work together to have a positive impact on employee engagement. These principles can be summed up as providing employees(citizens) with power, information, knowledge and rewards (Conrad, 2006).

Through power, employees (citizens) have the capacity to make decisions that are important to their performance and to the quality of their working lives. Creating forums for employees (or even citizens) to develop and share ideas to improve firm (national economic) performance can be effective, but only when good ideas from employees (citizens) actually get used.

Here, information means data, including information on the quantity and quality of business unit output, costs, revenues, profitability, and customer reactions. The more transparent managers (political leaders) can make the company's (nation's) operations, the more effectively employees (citizens) can contribute to the company's (nation's) success. Transparency is essential because it helps employees (citizens)see the link between their actions and the performance of the company(nation), thus enhancing the cognitive aspect of engagement.

C. *People Make a Difference*

Diversity really helps. This, together with inclusion has become increasingly important in the workplace.If everyone looks at a problem the same way, then they will only be able to offer one solution. Having a team with a variety of experience and skill sets mean that each will approach the same problem in different ways (RICS Recruit, 2018). The leader will thus be able to offer different options to his or her clients, and can even increase overall productivity.

In building a pipeline of strong leaders (regardless of gender) who are resilient and effective; their talents have to be tapped or capitalized. "It's all about ensuring you have the right talent, which means having access to female talent as well" (Odgers Berndtson, 2018).
Leaders tooindeed need to bear in mind these: "Be with your people, and let your people be with you. And often ask yourself: Are your people with you? Are you carrying your people along with you?" (Low, 2018; 2013, p. 479).

Listening, caring and compassionate as well as being human-orientated (Low and Ang, 2012*), leaders must be supportive. It is said that "when we give to others, share and support others, we become happy. Our lives become meaningful and our hearts full. Supportiveness is about service. Open-hearted service for the sake of helping others and benefiting others, with no thought to our own gain. Supportiveness is also about holding space for another, listening to another, and being there for others" (ReShel, 2016).

A recent classic Asian example of supportiveness, to the authors, is the cancellation of the Royal Birthday

party; "the ceremonial birthday function and the royal tea party, which were supposed to be held on Sept 9 at Istana Negara, have been cancelled. (The Agung) Sultan Muhammad V has also commanded that the funds allocated for the two official functions, be returned to the government and be channelled to TabungHarapan" (NST Online, 2018).

There is and should have this radical loving kindness in action. However, needless to say, this is not what is practised in certain Asian countries, as the politicians like parents would often remind the people that they, the people owe it to them for their well-being and even prosperity.

On the contrary, this quote by the poet, Hafiz (as cited by ReShel, 2016), sums this radical kindness in action up: "Even after all this time, the sun never says to the earth 'you owe me.'"

D. Workforce Evolution

Knowledge is employee skills and abilities and it can be distinguished from information which is the data employees use to make decisions and take action. Improving employees' knowledge means a commitment to training and development.Here, leaders must ask themselves, "Are you training your people? Are you growing your people? Are you tapping your people potential? Are you tapping the synergy of your people? Have you considered the team dynamics of your people?" (Low, 2018; 2013, p. 481).

The rewards portion of the high-involvement reckoning necessitates rewarding employees for expending discretionary effort to enhance organisational performance. A key constituent in the high-involvement equation, rewards for performance make certain that employees use their power, information and knowledge for the company's good.

E. Creativity Matters

Organisations need to boost or up creativity through furnishing the people with power, information, knowledge and rewards.

The people must be daring to be different or be MAD: Make A Differencewhile better still, capitalizing on their competitive edge. Ideas would also become increasingly important in a modern economy (Tang, 2018); and it is said that ideas are replacing or at least supplementing other traditional factors of production such as land, labor, and capital. Ideas especially creative ideas are increasingly relevant as physical brick and mortar fade from importance.

Leaders must learn and be more creative while encouraging creativity among the people. Maxwell

(2015) spoke of, "Make a habit, both inside and outside of work, of spending time with creatives. Let their way of thinking challenge and influence yours."

They are also daring enough to break the rules. Successful change efforts often require leaders to challenge standard approaches and find ways to maneuver around old practices, traditions and policies – even sacred cows. Leaders who shine at driving change will challenge even the rules that appear carved in stone (Zenger and Folkman, 2015).

Clearly so, creativity really matters for everyone; it becomes a priority. More so in the future, creativity will continue to be a key differentiator between humans and machines or robots in the workplaces (Tang, 2018). Indeed creativity is a quality that can be easily replaced by machines or robots. And what more, leaders and their teams need to be creative. Robotic work, as the name suggest, belongs to robots and automation. Creative work should be embraced and practiced by both the leaders and the people (Tang, 2018).

F. Connectivity Issues

In the new sharing economy, 21st century leaders views leadership as a vast network of sharing resources. This is driven by constant interconnectivity and technological advances, the way we conduct business and communicate in the 21st century is unlike ever before.Not solely the domain of those in command, but that leadership is now where everyone participates. Hence, leadership is now widely viewed as a network of connected individuals, communities and organisations, the sharing economy creates value through interaction and integration of idle resources, transforming the customer's role as a service provider for firms and other customers. In essence, it is more than behaviours, traits and styles of individual leader.

AI (Artificial Intelligence) is acknowledged as being inferior to human intelligence in at least three ways vis-à-vis the capacity to influence and inspireothers; the capacity to understand and share the feelings of another and the capacity to teach others through role modeling, coaching and mentoring. While complementing management and administrative functions, leadership is a distinct dimension of organisational life, and its development requires its special attention. Being able to refinetraitsthat are genetically human will shape future leaders and its leadership.

G. Evolving Leadership

We are seeing that 21st century leadership is a multidimensional and integrative view of leadership that is based in intertwined-relationships. Through the collective purposes and aspirations, leadership brings

forward new frontiers of being, knowing, and doing, while valuing the progress of humanity. 21st century leadership is oriented toward being inclusive, concerted, and of service, to individuals, the social good, and ecological sustainability.

The expression of the future leadership incorporates a gamut of values and nurtures a wide range of capacities, competencies, and skillsets, which are displayed in the various facets of leadership in context-specific ways. For example, critical, creative and systemic thinking, self-awareness, conversation, global and cultural awareness, and facilitation of teamwork and collaboration efforts.To advance this leadership paradigm, both an internal and external orientation is required involving the whole person who is engaged with the whole system.

H. Self-Discipline

One basic reason why one, let alone a leader, should be disciplined is that one does what needs to be done and what's to be done. The soldier who is capable of obedience and direction in action is an orderly fighting person or 'general'.

In Singapore (3 October 2018) recently, there was a report of two senior editors at national broadsheet *The Straits Times* have been disciplined amid an internal inquiry into their "improper relations" with a subordinate (https://sg.news.yahoo.com/two-straits-times-editors-disciplined-amid-probe-allegations-improper-relations-subordinate-085930161.html).
When passion, desire and lust take over rational thought, trouble or bad things happen. (Low, 2017; 2011). And when such things occurred, the perpetrators or doers can embarrass the organisation and business from which they come from. Ng (2014, also cited in Low, 2017) mentioned several cases that happened, and they included: a senior civil servant who faced corruption charges for engaging in extra marital affairs, school teachers and academics who slept with their students; a straight "A" student who set a world record for having continuous sex with 251 men and a married man running for political office who took "sexy" photographs of his maid. Self-control, restraint or discipline is indeed needed; it should be put into practice (Low, 2017).

As explained earlier, the 21st century leader, being principled, must indeed possess the 3 "olds" and 4 "stricts" (Low, 2017).

I. Sustainable Development Themes

Certainly, this is an important point; leaders must see the big picture and take actions.

Of relevance, Low (2018; 2013, p. 478/9) asked, "How can leaders create and sustain development for their countries and companies or organisations? How can they grow and ensure the success of their organisations? Are you (your organisation) being green? Can your Company (Organisation) sustain itself? Do you network enough and increase contacts to helping your business grow or nation develop?"

J. Understanding Big Data

Ignoring big data by leaders will spell doomsday. The capacity and understanding of leaders to interpret data into business value will become increasingly important, more so for leaders in the future economy. Rightly so, in business, information is power. For example, big data can provide valuable insight we could not have dreamed of collecting or analysing. Every facet of business landscape will be changed by big data in the near future.

The authors believe future leadership must be founded in symbiotic relationships, simultaneously influencing others to collaborate, address problems, and acclimate to ever-changing business climate rapidly. This way, can then leadership be practiced by individuals regardless of position, and with or without formal authority attached. Those who are described as "followers" are equally important as those with authority (or in power). The authors also argue that 21st century leadership is a perspective of leadership intended to respond to the unique challenges and opportunities of today's world. This is an important consideration vis-à-vis acknowledging that everyone is seamlessly woven together in the leadership practice.

In summary, 21st century leadership is a multidimensional and integrative understanding of leadership that is based on symbiotic relationships. From these key elements, we can begin to grow into more effective leaders – which are really what 21st century leadership is really about.

And indeed what the authors like about such a leadership is that the employees or people are given much empowerment, engagement, connectivity, listening, caring and creativity – that they, having shared responsibilities and collective aspirations, the people, with the organisation, are more likely to move forward towards good purpose, people power, progress, passion, professionalism and pride.

REFERENCES

[1] AlonIlan, Higgins James M., Crummer Roy E.(2005).Global leadership success through emotional and cultural intelligences, Business Horizons, 48(6), November–December, 501-512.

[2]   BBC (2017). 'Rohingya crisis: Johnson warns Suu Kyi over Muslim treatment', 3 September 2017, BBC. Website: https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-41139319 Accessed on 18 September 2018.

[3]   CNBC (2017). 'Singapore leader faces fresh criticism from brother amid family feud', 20 October 2017, CNBC. Website: https://www.cnbc.com/2017/10/20/singapore-leader-faces-fresh-criticism-from-brother-amid-family-feud.html Accessed on 17 September 2018.

[4]   Conrad, A.M. (2006). 'Engaging employees through high-involvement work practices' Ivey Business Journal, March/April 2006, Ivey Management Services, a division of the Richard Ivey School of Business: Canada.

[5]   Dauber Daniel, Fink, Gehard, Yolles Maurice (2012), A Configuration Model of Organizational Culture, SAGE Open, 2(1).

[6]   Davis, J. (2016). The Greats on Leadership, John Murray Press: USA.

[7]   https://sg.news.yahoo.com/two-straits-times-editors-disciplined-amid-probe-allegations-improper-relations-subordinate-085930161.html Accessed on 4 October 2018.

[8]   https://sgtalk.org/mybb/Thread-Ministers-are-not-paid-enough-%E2%80%9D-%E2%80%93-Goh-Chok-Tong-slams-suggestion-by-cutting-pay Accessed on 25 September 2018.

[9]   Henson, B. (2018). 'Meritocracy and mediocrity', 9 August 2018, Bertha Harian. Website: https://berthahenson.wordpress.com/2018/08/09/meritocracy-and-mediocrity/ Accessed on 25 September 2018.

[10]   Hugh-Jones, D. (2015), Honesty and beliefs about honesty in 15 countries, No. 2015-01, Norwich: School of Economics, University of East Anglia.

[11]   Javidan Mansour, Dorfman Peter W., Sully de Luque Mary, House Robert J (2006), In the Eye of the Beholder: Cross Cultural Lessons in Leadership from Project GLOBE, Academy of Management Perspectives, 20(1),

[12]   Kuan, J. (2018). Under Comments, 22 May 2018. Website: https://www.quora.com/In-what-ways-was-Dr-Mahathir-a-good-bad-leader-and-what-was-his-influence-on-Malaysian-politics Accessed on 17 September 2018.

[13]   Lee S.M. and Peterson, S.J. (2001), Culture, entrepreneurial orientation and global competitiveness, Journal of World Business 35(4), 401-416.

[14]   Low, K.C.P. (2018, 2013). Leading Successfully in Asia, Springer: Heidelberg, Germany.

[15]   Low, K.C.P. (2017). 'Managing People Reflections on an Old Chinese Proverb: "San Lao Si Yan" (3 "Olds" and 4 "Stricts")', InternationalJournal of Business and Social Science [IJBSS], December 2017, vol. 8 no. 12, p. 88-97.

[16]   Low, K. C. P. (2011) 'Leading, the Bruce Lee Way', Business Journal for Entrepreneurs, vol. 2010 issue 4, p. 127 – 135

[17]   Low, K. C. P. and Ang, S. L. (2012*). Leaders Who Care', International Journal of Business and Social Research (lJBSR), Maryland Institute of Research (MIR), Maryland, USA. ISSN 2164-2540 Volume-2, Number-3 June 2012. pp. 99-108.

[18]   Mah, A.Y. (2003). A thousand pieces of gold, HarperCollins Publishers: Great Britain.

[19]   Maxwell, J. C. (2015). 'Cultivating Creativity in Times of Crisis', 29 April 2015, The John Maxwell Company. Website: http://blog.johnmaxwell.com/blog/cultivating-creativity-in-times-of-crisis Accessed on 13 Sep 2018.

[20]   Merkin, R., Taras, V., Steel, P. (2014), State of the art themes in cross-cultural communication research: A systematic and meta-analytic review, International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 38, 1-23.

[21]   Montgomery Jr, Jack G.(2006), The Role of Organizational Culture in Effective Team Development, TopSCHOLAR®DLTS, Library Technical Services, Faculty Publications, Western Kentucky University.

[22]   NHCP (2018). 'Maria Corazon Cojuangco Aquino'. nhcp.gov.ph. National Historical Commission of the Philippines. Website: http://nhcp.gov.ph/maria-corazon-cojuangco-aquino/ Accessed on 22 August 2018.

[23]   NST Online (2018). 'King's birthday party cancelled', 30 August 2018, NST Online. Website: https://sg.yahoo.com/news/king-apos-birthday-party-cancelled-135554064.html Accessed on 31 August 2018.

[24]   Ng, P. (2014). All in the name of lust, Marshall Cavendish International Asia Pte. Ltd.: Singapore.

[25]   Odgers Berndtson, (2018) 'Women leadership in business', 22 June 2018, Odgersberndtson.com. Website: https://www.odgersberndtson.com/en-sg/insights/women-leadership-in-business Accessed on 18 September 2018.

[26]   Pesek, W. (2017). 'Why Mahathir Mohamad is Malaysia's best hope, and Najib's worst nightmare', 26 July 2017, South China Morning Post. Website: https://www.scmp.com/comment/insight-opinion/article/2104126/why-mahathir-mohamad-malaysias-best-hope-and-najibs-worst Accessed on 16 September 2018.

[27]   RICS Recruit (2018). 'How Diversity Helps the Workplace', 3 August 2018, RICS Recruit. Website: https://www.ricsrecruit.com/article/how-diversity-helps-the-workplace/ Accessed on 16 September 2018.

[28]   ReShel, A. (2016). 'Lao Tzu's Four Rules for Living', 23 September 2016, Uplift. Website: https://upliftconnect.com/lao-tzus-four-rules-living/ Accessed on 31 August 2018.

[29]   Richard, E.M. and McFadden, M. (2015), Saving Face: Reactions to cultural norm violations in business request emails, Journal of Business and Psychology, 1-15.

[30]   Rost, J. (1991, p. 126). Leadership for the twenty-first century. Westport Connecticut: Praeger.

[31]   Stone, R.J. (2013). (3rd. ed.) Managing Human Resources, John Wiley & Sons, Australia: Australia.

[32]   Straits Times (2018). 'Koh Boon Hwee to step down as Far East H-Trust chairman', 29 March 2018, The Straits Times. Website: https://www.straitstimes.com/business/companies-markets/koh-boon-hwee-to-step-down-as-far-east-h-trust-chairman Accessed on 18 September 2018.

[33]   Tang, D. (2018). Leadership for Future of Work, www.DicksonLeader.com.

[34]   Vasagar, J. (2016). 'Daughter of Lee Kuan Yew criticises 'authoritarian' government', 15 August 2016, Financial Times. Website: https://www.ft.com/content/9c5438f4-6238-11e6-a08a-c7ac04ef00aa Accessed on 18 September 2016.

[35]   Yap, L. (2018). 'Why a top Singapore executive fired himself', 15 August 2018, The Economics Times. Website: https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/business/why-a-top-singapore-executive-fired-himself/articleshow/65410886.cms Accessed on 18 September 2018.

[36]   Zenger, J and Folkman, J. (2015). '7 Things Leaders Do to Help People Change', Harvard Business Review, 20 July 2015, Website: https://hbr.org/2015/07/7-things-leaders-do-to-help-people-change Accessed on 16 September 2018.