



GENERAL ARTICLE

Leadership in Perspective: Attentive Magnetic Leader, East, West and Beyond

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Key words: Leadership style

Abstract

Sports business institutions are decaying our trust spirits, and unfortunately, we are allowing it to happen in exchange for an illusion of power and control. We dimmed our sentience and rational, and they have been incompetent in effectively serving the leadership needs of the globalized sports industry. This gratuity largely goes to almighty western leadership practices, and to some extent, eastern practices that mostly “focus on monitoring rather than mentoring people.” In sports leadership, a shift from ‘monitoring’ to ‘mentoring,’ and accountability is due past. The purpose of this study is to discuss and address ‘the call’ for a new sports business leadership style that is capable of addressing the challenges and the expectations of a brand new globalized sports consumer.

Introduction:

“Although psychologists know a great deal about leadership, persons who make decisions about real leaders seem large to ignore their accumulated wisdom. (Hogan *et al.*, 1994). A simple definition of leadership is that “leadership is the art of motivating a group of people to act towards achieving a common goal.” (Susan, 2020), “the activity of leading a group of people or an organization” (Haslem *et al.*, 2007) the art of motivating a group of people to act towards achieving a common goal” (Wangmo & Samul, 2019). “For leadership to function well, leaders and followers must be bound by a shared identity and by the quest to use that identity as a blueprint for action” (Kumar *et al.*, 2011). For centuries, the concept of leadership has been studied and investigated relentlessly by scholars, practitioners, and government officers (Lakoff & Johnson, 2008). Studies focused on revealing the leadership styles, traits, and philosophical approaches and perspectives in different parts of the world by using various metaphors or figures. A good portion of these studies has compared and contrasted the differences between and among the various leadership styles or traits. (Allio, 2013; Witt & Redding, 2012). Naturally, they have also investigated their weaknesses and strengths. Historically, leadership scholars considered charisma, intelligence, and other personality traits to be the key to effective leadership. In recent years, however, a new picture of leadership has emerged, one that accounts for leadership performance. According to this alternative view, “effective leaders must work to understand

the values and opinions of their followers--rather than assuming absolute authority--to enable a productive dialogue with followers about what the group embodies and stands for and thus how it should act.” (Haslem *et al.*, 2007). Ting-Toomey (1999) believes that global leaders need to be skilled in creating trans-cultural visions. To work effectively with people, the leader/manager will need to understand how their culture, geography, and religion have shaped them, and how to adapt your management style to their differences. (Robbins & Stephen, 2005). Leadership is also viewed as “in the eye of the beholder” (Dorfman *et al.*, 2004). Leadership refers to what people see in others when they are exhibiting leadership behaviors. However, globalization has created a need for leaders with a greater understanding of cultural differences and increased competencies in cross-cultural communication and practice. From this perspective, the history of studying the cultural differences in leadership is fairly new. A large portion of leadership studies has been about western leadership practices. The few that addresses culture and its impact on leadership only compare the Eastern and Western leadership practices.

Philosophies in Leadership:

The current accumulated common belief is that there is a significant difference between Eastern and Western leadership philosophies that leaders are shaped by their cultural setup. In 1992, John Gray in his book “Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus” portrayed the picture to address the significant differences between men and

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women. He states that “the most common relationship problems between man and women are a result of the fundamental psychological difference between the sexes are emerging as a result of which ‘eponymous’ metaphor that men are from Mars and women are from Venus, and each sex is acclaimed to its own planet’s society and customs. To speculate it a bit different yet in a similar orientation, I would like to also use an astrological metaphor to speculate the importance of culture on leadership. It is a well-known fact that eastern and western cultures are opposite of each other. To use the astrological metaphor I codify that East from Elnath West from Wasat. East from Elnath,

According to Wikipedia, Elnath is one of the brightest stars in the Taurus constellation “which has a feminine polarity and represents the element of earth.” Elnath represents “the sign of stability and resistance to the change.” In literature, eastern cultures are described to be more “feminine (not macho), stable in nature, and resistant to change.” West from Wasat, wasat is also one of the brightest stars but it is located in the Gemini constellation which has a twin character and contains an element of ‘air,’ according to astronomical characterization it is “macho or masculine, not stable in nature, prone to changes and evolves unexpectedly.” (Wikipedia). In literature, western culture is declared to be more “prone to changes and evolves unexpectedly.” Both eastern and western cultures have very different and strong characteristics in nature and both represent different traditions, natural elements, and belief systems. Each culture is acclaimed to its own planet’s society and customs, and in terms of leadership each can be understood only through understanding the distinct trademarks of each culture that calls for a very distinctive type of leadership personality. It would be ill-advised or illogical, therefore to think that men and women coming from these very antagonistic cultural backgrounds would be willing to yield easily. However, it would be also inconsequential to think that they cannot make the efforts towards common-sense solutions. Yes, the fundamental aspects of our cultures and the organizations rooted in those cultures are remarkably proud of what they have. Hence, while psycho-socially cultures are robust but it must be recognized that bases of human needs are similar. Given that good leadership depends on constituent cooperation and support. This fact alone is a good enough reason for making reconciliations just like it happened in Nelson Mandela’s South Africa, for instance.

Current World Of Leadership Principles:

The current world of leadership principles mainly designed and based on traditional Western Christian thought which has created a world so dependent on the centrality of leadership that people or followers have developed a “learned dependency” and fear of being isolated or eliminated. According to Ann McGee-Cooper, (1996) part

of this is happening within the premises of “social change” that is confused with speed. The reason for that because the traditional western leadership pushes for speed, not for real change. Western ideology believes that with speed change will happen anyhow.

We are leaving in a ‘global village’ where all of the cultures meet and practice their leadership belief systems commonly. There is significant evidence that both Eastern and Western leadership philosophies influence one another, yet, disputes are also common. For instance, in 2011 the Japanese medical equipment and camera maker Olympus sued former CEO Michael Woodford (western leader) in a multi-million-pound legal row over allegations of wrongdoing surrounding an executive pension plan. Olympus initially said, “Woodford was fired for failing to understand its (Olympus’) management style and Japanese culture.”*** Although this case is a good illustration of collision and disparities of cultures it is also a very good example of ‘globalization’ through the process of leadership. In its simplest nature “globalization is the process and reflection of how human societies are functioning at current times” (Nkosiathi, 2002). In terms of culture, Kumar *et al.*, (2011) described culture “as the commonly shared beliefs, values, and norms of a group of people.” Culture provides people with a set of values and assumptive beliefs as well as implicit inferences about how the world operates, which enable them to find meaning in and make sense of the events of their lives (Hofstede, 2001; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Culture provides an understanding to a leader about purposive behavior, which requires an understanding of the cultural “language” in which it occurs (Sing, 2010). While each school of intellection (Eastern and Western) has unique and distinctive leadership qualities that have been formed throughout history unfortunately they are unable to fully address the needs of today’s more globally-minded consumers. For instance, electronic social media and internet use have been effectively enlightening and uniting people from East to West without discriminating any. The outsourcing of businesses and services are not only delivering goods and services but also cultures, habits, and beliefs.

Global Perspective and Sports Leadership:

In the world of sports; athletes and coaches travel around the globe not only for competitive purposes but to occupy leadership-managerial and coaching positions as well. Historically sport is one of the pioneer professions that have gone global. Ever since the inception of the Modern Olympic Games sports have been on the global stages. The leadership styles and work ethics of both sports coaches and athletes have been widely studied and exemplified. Books and articles have been published and delivered worldwide. Eastern coaches and managers, for instance, from China and Russia have been hired to coach and lead sports

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programs such as gymnastics, figure skating, and taekwondo, etc. in the USA or Europe. Similarly, American and Western European coaches and managers have been coaching and managing Chinese, Indian or Russian basketball, soccer, and volleyball, etc. teams.

The existence of this exchange process has tremendously accelerated the globalization process in sport as well as in general social structures. Those coaches and athletes have become ambassadors of their respected cultures to the host nations or cultures. During their tenure, while they export their culture and leadership philosophies, they also learn from the hosting nation's cultures, traditions, and leadership values and philosophies. By recognizing this, coaches and athletes have been constantly used by governments and societies to reach out and export and import ideologies, customs, and technologies to one another. A good example is the NBA great coach Phil Jackson practices zen principles, and NFL legend coach Tony Dungy practices servant leadership philosophy for coaching, both are eastern philosophical practices. Our times require leaders who are not only intelligent but socially and culturally wise. According to Goleman "wise leaders develop strategies that target the greater good, and they are socially and culturally sensitive" (Daniel, 2020).

Our times call for a solution, for a leader who unites and brings people and cultures together, who develops a mastery of magnetism or magnetic thinking philosophy. A mastery of magnetism is leadership that germinates strategies that target the greater good which is globally sound and culturally sensitive leadership.

The Magnetic Leader:

What is mastery of magnetism and who is the magnetic leader? If we speak of 'leader' as the magnetic head of the managed body we should then classify the 'leadership' as the intellectual state in which determine the well-being or the illness of the managed body. This intellectual state (the leader) is the insight into the mechanism of the managed body (the followers) by which thoughts or emotions are translated into decisions, which in the end govern the well-being of both the magnetic head and the managed body. The mastery of magnetism leads from, aspiration and he/she is a negotiator. As a negotiator, during the process of revealing personal magnetism, the magnetic leader conceals all dislikes and all negative feelings towards people or followers. He/she is attentive to questions and concerns. To a leader who has magnetic qualities, leadership is a process that allows him/her to deal with others (the followers) for their pleasure and in exchange for his/her pleasure. Magnetic leaders have a mantra of personal magnetism in them that is inherent, and natural for them and, once it is en-grafted into the life of a person it remains with him/her forever. The process of magnetism is life itself. Magnetic leaders are attentive and study others and study

their power sources. They learn how to mentor and draw out the talent qualities and abilities of others by encouragements, suggestions, advice, and through a personal demonstration. While it is a natural process that the increase of magnetism in some individuals leads to the power of expansions (cancer for most modern leadership practices) in which create an ability to affect and influence others, a good leader with high magnetic power does not allow this power to be defective and destructive. This is how destructive or toxic leadership takes its stage. In many ways, a Magnetic Leader is a "global leader" who recognizes the "global" concerns and values of "global consumers" whether they are from East Elnath or West Wasat. These leaders are attentive and attuned to the suffering of the powerless, and seek to repair that damage by treating or attempting to cure diseases that plague the poor, (Mother Theresa, Bill Gates) enhancing the viability of local communities, or fighting poverty.

A man cannot be an attentive magnetic leader if he/she uses power as a fear factor. An attentive magnetic leader needs to distinguish right from wrong (western) or true from false (eastern) and needs to learn and unlearn and lead others justly (eastern) and righteously (western), and by 'law' (east and west) and 'intelligence' and wisdom (east and west) (Dhammapada). He/she does not focus on monitoring rather he/she mentor their followers or work partners or people (global). He/she wins his/her greatest distinction by actions (western), not by mere words, rely on wisdom (eastern), deeds (east and west), or promises. Talk, dream (east) theorize (west), but push them through to 'realization' (west) and 'enlightenment' (east). They value the process of far-reaching. By recognizing the far-reaching repercussions of their actions (global), these leaders engage people's passion and foster organizations where work has deeper meaning (global). They are also eager to explore new approaches to their works, and they seek out creative challenges that lead them to the process of enlightenment (east and west and global). Through the realization and enlightenment process (Elnath) attentive magnetic leader becomes a globally conscientious leader who has the personal magnetism that is crafted with the unique manner of living habits which includes the expression of thoughts (wasat) of feelings. He/she poses the activities of solitude and association with others (global), and the operations of life that are trusted and beloved by the others (humanistic).

Conclusion:

We have to understand and be sincere to ourselves that no individual can have all the answers. Leadership is a matter of how to be, (Elnath) at the same time it is about how to do (wasat) and is a process of building bridges (global). It is therefore safe to argue that, (within its own complexities) an attentive magnetic leader by nature is a unifying healer. It is generally accepted that in every individual (coach,

athlete or sportsman, and sportswoman) there is an accumulation of individual energies left to drift. When it is properly excited or coached these individuals' (magnetic) energies could become a good force for success but when it is not properly excited or coached, they could become destructive or toxic. Attentive magnetic leaders should "learn and unlearn" things quickly, effectively, and holistically. The attentive magnetic leadership concept is idealized and developed based on a unique synthesis of Eastern and Western leadership philosophies, and hence by the realities of a global process. The unique characteristics of the new global sports business market have developed a new type of sports consumer base, and therefore a need for a new type of leadership style that is capable of addressing the challenges and the expectations of the global market and global consumer. The attentive magnetic leadership could be that new leadership phenomenon that can address this newly formed global consumer base. The Attentive magnetic leader is a leader who practices all aforementioned four unique leadership qualities (thinker, feeler, healer, and sensor) that are driven from East's sense impulse meditative and West's form impulse pragmatic leadership philosophies, and new world order process. The current global consumer's leadership expectations are more common than ever before. Alone, neither East's meditative sense impulse nor West's pragmatic aggressive leadership philosophies are completely competent enough to address the needs of the newly formed global consumer. East from Elnath West from Wasat.

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