

***Tsunami* Leadership and Organizational Turmoil & Mayhem**

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What Is Effective Leadership?



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1. The leader is a person who can be a good sample or more aptly an example or role model for the followers
2. It is worthy to note that particularly so in Asia where loyalty and compliance appears to be virtues stressed by the superiors, some malaise (the Hang Tuah syndrome or blind loyalty) may occur, and
3. These so-called leaders (non-leaders) may not even know themselves or their own respective goals, and yet they simply or blindly do what their superiors ask them to do or worse, apple-polishing or licking the boots of their superiors (Low, 2013)



What Is Tsunami Leadership?



Tsunami, a Japanese terminology expressing a series of disasters caused by the displacement of a large volume of a body of water, typically an ocean, does not resemble normal sea waves; it has far longer wavelength. Although the impact of tsunami is limited to coastal areas, their destructive power can be enormous and they can affect entire ocean basins (Wells, 1990).

Tsunami leadership, in this context, refers to a series of personality traits encompassing non-leadership behaviours, self-centric egoisms with high power in hand, and these also include having no vision and direction, failing to encourage or motivate subordinates, having difficulties or failing to learn from their mistakes, even minor mistakes; and failing to anticipate changes in the business landscape.

Research Methodology

This research is based on a series of interviews

- each time approximately 30 to 45 minutes though some interviews might stretch to an hour plus

- conducted with 20 business leaders from Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Brunei (7 interviewees), Indonesia (7 interviewees) and Singapore (6 interviewees),

Pilot-tested, these questions

1. What are your views of Tsunami leadership?
2. What are your view(s) of a leader who is highly egoistic or arrogant?
Perhaps a bully? Have you encountered such leader in any time of your career?
3. What is your opinion of a leader who is totally irresponsible? Have you met one in your career?
4. When and in what situations do you face such kind of leader?
5. Do you think your subordinates like such kind of leader? If no, why not?
6. Should leaders be self-centered, if not selfish and egoistic?
7. Have you ever encountered a non-leader who is in a position of a leader?
In what kinds of organisations have you encountered?

Tsunami Leadership Is:

Traits	Impact
<p>abusiveness, incompetent and bullying. Such leadership generates fear in people of the leaders and at the workplace.</p>	<p>Being ignorant about the truth or in most ways being incompetent, obstinate behavioural patterns, providing wrong information, being intolerant, arrogant and dictatorial, even punishing and eliminating those who do not follow or obey them. “They threaten, abusing or misusing their powers to cover up or camouflage their incompetence” (several interviewees’ inputs).</p>
<p>case of a non-leader in a leadership position (like a Wolf in a sheep’s clothing). “(S)he does more of apple-polishing and pleasing the higher-ups.”</p>	<p>Having wrong perceptions about the real situations – especially at the frontline, viewing things from their own narrow perspective(s) and consequently; create confusion leading to chaotic situations and have poor levels of achievement.</p>
<p>incapable of team leading. “(S)he bullies and threatens”.</p>	<p>Disruptive to teamwork, such a leader divides and rules; instead (s)he does much politicking.</p>
<p>incapable of leading, managing and implementing/ progressing change.</p>	<p>Change is not done in a good way; “it is haphazardly done with little transparency” (several interviewees’ inputs) and lack of regard to the employees’ confidence and security. Change is made with no or little people touch; organizational stability and growth are also affected. Instead, there is much organizational disruption and destruction, and employees’ morale suffers too.</p>
<p>usually with little or no subordinates’ support</p>	<p>Possessing self-interest; persuading followers to support him or her by forming clique(s) of his or her own kind;</p>
<p>having often sudden and shocking policies (procedures or happenings) implemented</p>	<p>Putting people in a totally unprepared situation, with their schedule and work drastically affected.</p>
<p>groupthink of the Tsunami leaders</p>	<p>Firmly supporting each other, these leaders practice groupthink; this leads them to make unrealistic, faulty decisions, and they are indeed cut off from the ground/ people’s thinking needs.</p>

Impact

Like Tsunami, the effects of Tsunami leaders are devastating and upsetting. They are one of the worst disasters that can hit an organization:

1. The **damages or impairments** range from demoralized and/or demotivated employees or followers
2. **Distrust** towards the organization
3. A **divided** organization
4. Millions of dollars in **financial losses**
5. **High turnovers and long lasting psychological problems** for the employees
6. The impact continues to **cause much harm or costs** for long period of time.

Key Differences between Leader and *Tsunami* Leader

Leader	Tsunami Leader
Is a leader and a competent one (Pusch, 2009)	Is a non-leader and an incompetent person (Low and Ang, 2013; Devereaux, 2015).
Enables change (Osborne, 2015; Low, 2013a; Kotter, 1999; Denton, 1996) with innovation (Osborne, 2015). Leads change in a people-oriented way, highlighting the benefits of change, reducing the fears of change while building the support for change (Kotter, 1999; Denton, 1996). (S)he inspires top performance (Price and Price, 2013). There is much participation and ownership of the employees in the organizational change process. (Effective leaders too also give the attractiveness of the vision of the future. Zimmerman, 2013; 1993).	Is impatient, Tsunami leader is not capable of leading and managing change. The instil fear and employees do not see the support rendered. There is little participation and ownership of the employees in the organizational change process; they see little beauty in the change process, let alone, the attractiveness of the vision of the future (Not given much direction, the people are indeed not oriented, unprepared, and not ready or geared towards the change.)
Continuously change him (her)self without changing values and virtues (Low and Ang, 2013). (S)he stresses on learning to improve (Osborne, 2015).	Has no ability to continuously change him(her)self but always change the values and virtues (Low et al., 2012)
Sets the example, and does as what (s)he preaches (Low and Ang, 2013; Low, 2013a; Maxwell, 1993).	Not proactive (Covey, 1990: 70). Is not the role model and does not set the example. Followers are asked to do what (s)he says to do, not what (s)he does.
Has the people's vital trust of him (her) (Horsager, 2012). Note that	Does not have the people's trust of him (her). "Trust influences a leader's impact on the company's bottom line or results more than any other single thing." (Low and Teece, 2014: 92; Horsager, 2012). This being the case, without the people's vital trust, the Tsunami leader puts his organization in trouble or jeopardize the organization's bottom line.
Builds the confidence of the people/ followers (Osborne, 2015).	Threatens and makes people lose their confidence. Generates fear at the workplace.

Key Differences between Leader and *Tsunami* Leader ... ont'd

Leader	Tsunami Leader
Has ability to develop, share, and convey a vision (Osborne, 2015; Maxwell, 1993; Bass, 1990)	Has no clear vision and managing by trial and errors (Low and Muniapan, 2011).
Builds team leadership; energizes the team. (Osborne, 2015; Price and Price, 2013; Low, 2013a)	Does not build team leadership, and can even demotivate and/ or even demoralize team members (Price and Price, 2013).
Incorporates continuous innovation with proper planning (Osborne, 2015; Martensen & Dahlgard, 1999)	Apply shock policies due to organization politics (Low and Muniapan, 2011a).
Has confidence in technology (Benhabib & Spiegel, 2005)	Is resistant against technology (Low, 2013).
Has a global mind-set (Gupta & Govindarajan, 2002) or better still global mind growth (Low, 2012a). Mindset is fixed while mind growth has a flexibility and growth nuance; with the organization being biological or organic (Morgan, 2006, 1997).	Has a local or parochial, if not, being less creative or having a limited mind-set (Low, 2013).
Has employees/ followers who are more satisfied and committed to organization (Podsakoff et al., 1996)	Has turnover that is high, dissatisfaction is increased with rumors all over organization (Low and Muniapan, 2011)
Recognizes ethics, values, and spirituality (Low, 2013)	Does not recognize ethics, values, and spirituality; ethics, values, and spirituality are only a jargon (Low, 2010).
Has a lifelong learning and relationship, system thinking (Pielstick, 1998; Anshari et al., 2013)	Has a short term relationship and thinking (Low, 2001; Jung et al., 2003; Anshari & Almunawar, 2013)
Is adaptive to the changing circumstances in order to maintain control (Valle, 1999)	Is rigid, maintaining the status quo no matter what situation is (Eisenbach et al., 1999).
Is a servant-leader (Center for Servant Leadership, 2015; Greenleaf, 1977)	Is more self-centered (Covey, 1992).

Benefits and Limitations of the Study

1. Research was conducted in **Southeast Asian** countries vis Indonesia, Brunei and Singapore that bounds with pre-determined cultures and behaviours that render these findings dissimilar from other culturally diverse countries, and it is imperative to test the model for bigger population and dissimilar settings of participants' behaviour
2. Study concerns with the individual behaviours that affect organizational performance, but the complexities of an individual behaviours may require **different situational approaches** rather than looking from the Tsunami leadership perspective.

Concluding Remarks

This study aims to contribute to our understanding of a new branch of leadership labelled as Tsunami leadership which underscore the **leader's ineffectiveness**, functioning like a non-leader and the magnitude of the effect of such type of leadership that comes from the failure to anticipate changes caused by either personal issues or environmental settings

It concludes that such a leader **does not possess innate ability to embrace change** in the business landscape. The Tsunami leadership notion changes the assertive and constructive communication patterns between individuals and teams. It alters the design of the organization by fostering negative traits of leadership

The effects of Tsunami leaders are **devastating and upsetting**. These “organizational hit-men” are one of the worst disasters that can befall an organization

The damages range from demoralized and/or demotivated employees and followers, and their diminishing trust, if not mistrust towards the organization, the senior managers, a divided or disunited organization, millions of dollars in financial losses, high turnovers and long lasting psychological problems for the employees, and the impact lingers on to cause much pains, irreparable losses for the organization.

Q&A?